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ABSTRACT

This book is a collection of 11 essays about research into the phenomena of leadership and other social processes of influence in organizations. After a context-setting introduction by Ken W. Perry and James R. Meindl, the main text includes the following essays: (1) "Salient Bias in Discussion and Research on Leadership" (Micha Popper); (2) "Aesthetics in Leadership" (Arja Ropo, Jaana Pariainen, and Niina Koivunen); (3) "Viewing the Dispersion of Leadership through a Power Lens: Exposing Unobstrusive Tensions and Problematic Processes" (Raymond D. Gordon); (4) "Influence, Institutional Theory, and Language: An Analysis of Popular Management Discourse on Downsizing" (Richard Dunford); (5) "A Grounded Leadership Theory with Insights into Entrepreneurship" (Lessey Sooklal and Dennis Hanlon); (6) "Building Theory in Leadership through Electronic Networking" (Patrick Duignan, Victoria Collins, Lyn Coulon, and Mike Fagan); (7) "Triangulation in Action: Integration of Qualitative and Quantitative Methods to Research Environmental Leadership" (Susan Herman and Carolyn P. Egri); (8) "Grounded Theory: Creating Valued Leadership Research through Partnering" (Craig A. Roberts); (9) "Reinterpreting the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire" (Melanie Kan); (10) "A Story of Missed Opportunities: Qualitative Methods for Leadership Research and Practice" (Jay A. Conger and Ginka Toegel); and (11) "Models, Methods, and Triangulation: Researching the Social Processes in Our Societies" (Ken W. Parry and James R. Meindl). (RT)

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Grounding Leadership Theory and Research

Issues, Perspectives, and Methods

Volume 1 in: Research in Leadership Horizons

Edited by
Ken W. Parry
James R. Meindl

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Grounding Leadership Theory and Research

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VOLUME 1 IN:
RESEARCH IN LEADERSHIP HORIZONS

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Grounding Leadership Theory and Research: Issues, Perspectives, and Methods

Volume 1
Leadership Horizons Series

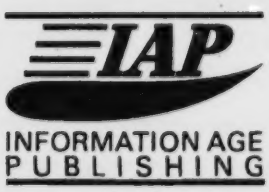
Series Editor: James R. Meindl
State University of New York at Buffalo

Grounding Leadership Theory and Research:

Issues, Perspectives, and Methods

Edited by

Ken W. Parry and James R. Meindl



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INTRODUCTION

At the initiation of this project, we asked selected colleagues from around the world to submit essays about research into the phenomena of leadership and other social processes of influence in organizations. The research method that would primarily (but not entirely) be employed for this research is grounded theory, or at least derived from the principles of the grounded theory method, which qualitatively analyzes (predominantly) qualitative data to derive explanatory theory. We expected some chapters to be about recent research projects, others to be about the nature of social processes, others about the research process, and others about the implications for practitioners in organizations.

Although "leadership" was the main thrust of the book, we expected, and found, that the findings and implications from these essays are applicable to organizational behavior generally rather than to leadership more specifically.

The book commences with chapters about salient issues that pertain more generally to leadership and its research. The chapters move on to more specific organizational issues such as the role of power in the overt dispersal of leadership in organizations and the use of metaphor in the rhetoric of language about managerial phenomena. The book then has two chapters on alternate approaches to the use of the grounded theory method to the study of leadership. The final four chapters are mainly about grounded theory and certainly all about leadership. Alternate methodological applications of grounded theory are discussed, including the valuable role of the triangulation of data, method, theory, and researcher.

SALIENT ISSUES

Micha Popper examines some salient biases existing in the extant literature on leadership, including a tendency to romanticize leadership and a tendency to "deconstruct" it into specific measurable, quantitatively researchable variables. Some of these biases are of a theoretical-conceptual nature and result from historical research trends, while other biases are psychological in nature. The result of these biases is that mainstream leadership discourse places excessive weight on the leaders, the followers, and the circumstances. Popper concludes with a "relational" approach to leadership. As always, it is a deeply perceptive, insightful, and well-constructed chapter. In another fascinating chapter, Arja Ropo and colleagues base their insights on experience from professional settings like dance, music, and science. Whereas mainstream leadership literature still treats "social" process as a cognition, these authors draw upon a more aesthetic perspective on organizational life, wherein "knowing" is more than merely cognition. They argue for the importance of "bodily" knowledge and "bodily" presence in understanding social relations in the workplace. They suggest that this "aesthetic" perspective would further the discussion of leadership as a relational, social process where everyday practice in the workplace is characterized by multiple voices, arguments, and negotiation.

SPECIFIC ISSUES

Ray Gordon argues that the current wide spread adoption of shared or dispersed leadership strategies by organizations is problematic. He argues that the extant leadership literature insufficiently covers the relationship between leadership and power at the 'deep structure' level. Citing the substantive setting of his research, which draws upon ethnography, grounded theory, and discourse analysis, he finds that despite the implementation of structural changes that should have resulted in the transfer of leadership skills and responsibilities to lower level workers, the discretionary power of these workers remained severely constrained. Power continues to be applied in unobtrusive and covert ways. The chapter asserts that managers need to move beyond the study of overt structures and decision making, and explore how power at a deep structure level unobtrusively affects the nature of influence in their organization.

In a variation from the standard theme, Dunford examines the role of language in the institutionalization process in organizations. In particular, the role of metaphors and analogies in generating meaning is examined. While not specifically about leadership, an understanding of the role of micro-level aspects of these processes in the management of meaning

within organizations is a crucial part of the leadership challenge for all members of organizations or other societies. Within the popular management literature, they found support for the hypothesis that naturalizing analogies assist in normalizing practices that are advocated by management. Dunford identified the dominance of body/medical and military/violence root analogies within the downsizing literature.

ALTERNATE APPROACHES

Sooklal and Hanlon used qualitative data, content analyzed quantitatively, to test for the relevance of one grounded theory in another substantive setting. Therefore, essentially they are able to report on two grounded theory projects in one chapter. Sooklal cites the leadership phenomenon of one giving an identity to one's personal vision, and then relinquishing ownership of that vision—the "brokering of dreams." Hanlon's methodological and data triangulation found conflicting results, a theme permeating throughout this book. Making sense of those ambiguities is also a theme and a strength of this book. Hanlon also found that the "enactment" of the leadership vision was found to be more "management" than "leadership."

Duignan and colleagues describe research that again integrates qualitative and quantitative data, analyzed with the grounded theory method and using an interactive website to conduct the process. This chapter demonstrates creative attempts to integrate both qualitative and quantitative data. One of the most interesting aspects of this research was the inclusion of "reflective practitioners" as coresearchers. Duignan and colleagues formally and systematically include into their research a collaborative, participative, and reflective ethic. In contrast with mainstream leadership research, we see within theory formulation a refreshing degree of active participation between the objects and the subjects of the study.

METHODOLOGICAL APPLICATIONS

Herman and Egri are concerned with the values, leadership philosophies, and leadership-related challenges of environmental leaders. Triangulation was a strong theme of their research methodology. Rather than viewing various research methods as part of an incompatible qualitative–quantitative dichotomy, they approached them as complementary modes of investigation, resulting in a deeper understanding of the environmental leadership phenomenon. As with other chapters, a theme evolved of the value to be gained from the interpersonal interaction with respondents, resulting in findings that are immediately useful to practitioners, not simply to

researchers. Finally, this chapter illustrates the value to be gained from a team approach to this sort of phenomenological research.

In conducting his grounded theory research into the process of how individuals make sense of their own leadership development in the New Zealand police force, Craig Roberts found it extremely beneficial to invest time and effort into developing and managing an informal strategic alliance between him and the organization. To successfully implement the theoretical sampling approach used in the grounded theory method, it was evident that benefits from the research must be seen to accrue to not only the body of theoretical knowledge but also the organization under investigation, in this case the New Zealand Police. Roberts's chapter considers this strategic alliance and its critical contribution to developing a robust, grounded theory. With his research "partnering" method, the researcher becomes an actor in the phenomenon, *and* the actors effectively become coresearchers.

Melanie Kan has used both qualitative and quantitative data in her grounded theory analysis of nursing leadership processes in a hospital. Continuing the theme in this book of the triangulation of data and methodology, Kan has found ambiguous results between the two data sources. Once again, the grounded theory method allows for the generation of categories at a higher level of abstraction, which explain the variation in findings. The questionnaire data found high levels of effective leadership, whereas the observation and interview data found a paucity of leadership. It was the environment and culture of the workplace that provided the insights into how respondents could see leadership being attempted, but repressed by the multiple realities of the different lives of the medical and administrative cohorts of the organization.

Conger and Toegel's chapter explores the essential role that qualitative methods should and must play in leadership research and practice. The authors' position is in contrast to most trends in the field where quantitative methods, measuring a mainly cognitive domain, have had a great influence on how we study leadership and attempt to develop leadership capabilities. Conger and Toegel contend that behavioral competency models of leadership (and they cite Bass, Kouzes, & Posner as well as Sashkin as examples) and multirater feedback approaches have encouraged an almost singular focus on leadership as a well-delineated, static, and, in many cases, universal set of dimensions. The other authors in this book agree that these trends fail to capture the reality of leadership. The complexity of the operating environment means that the majority of existing models fail to differentiate across the many dimensions of that environment. They also contend that we have paid a high price for the illusion of precision provided by multirater feedback in leadership development. Finally, *inter alia*, they make cogent suggestions about how to create qualita-

tive questionnaires and other ways to generate deeper and more explanatory insights into the phenomenon of leadership.

Parry and Meindl's final chapter is both an integration and an introduction of some new methodological practices that further the triangulation theme of this book. The authors introduce the notion of dimensionalizing the coded qualitative data gathered from transcribed stories told by respondents about organizational phenomena. Dimensionalizing is one task of the grounded theory method. However, in this case the authors are suggesting the quantitative dimensionalizing of the categories that emerge. These quantitative data then allow structural equation modeling to be undertaken, which will complement the conceptual modeling that would also occur within the grounded theory method. The other introduction in this chapter is that of hierarchy of abstraction modeling. The authors cite research in which the hierarchies of abstraction that emerge from grounded theory research are then replicated psychometrically and modeled into a structural equation model.

CHAPTER 1

SALIENT BIASES IN DISCUSSION AND RESEARCH ON LEADERSHIP

Micha Popper
University of Haifa

ABSTRACT

This chapter deals with some salient biases existing in the literature on leadership within the broad range between the tendency to romanticize leadership and the tendency to "deconstruct" it into specific measurable, quantitatively researchable variables. Some of these biases are of a theoretical–conceptual nature and stem from trends that reflect ways of looking and thinking about leadership characteristic of specific historical periods, while some are psychological, demonstrated in this chapter by examples and research. The result of these biases, as analyzed in the chapter, is that excessive weight is placed on one of the three components existing in the discussion on leadership: the leaders, the followers, and the circumstances. Following the discussion, the chapter suggests an approach that focuses on the view of leadership as a type of relationship, pointing out the advantages and the conceptual and research implications of this approach.

In one of his songs the famous French singer, Georges Brassens, demonstrates his love by refusing to marry his beloved. "If you want me to go on loving you," sings Brassens, "we should not let tedious everyday routine into our lives, because that will be the end of our love."

I chose to start with this as an illustration of the possible gaps between the romantic ideal and the reality that is often perceived to be so full of details and constraints as to be tedious. The phenomenon of leadership, like that of falling in love, is shrouded in "romantic folklore" (Lindholm, 1988; Meindl, 1995). In the literature on leadership both views can be found: the "romantic" view, which sees leaders as figures larger than life (Carlyle, 1841/1907), and the empirical behavioral view, which often presents an almost technical approach, breaking down the leadership phenomenon into very specific "leadership behaviors" that influence limited dependent variables in the realm of attitudes or performance (see, e.g., Conger & Kanungo, 1987).

Between the "romantic" and "technical" images of leadership there is a vast space filled with a mixture of folklore and facts. In this chapter I attempt, out of my experience in the past as commander of the Israel Defense Force School of Leadership and at present as an academic researcher and consultant on leadership, to indicate some salient biases in the way leadership is conceptualized and studied. Based on examination of these biases, I offer an alternative approach for the analysis and study of leadership.

RULERSHIP AND LEADERSHIP

Burns (1978, 1995) cites an apposite example of the connection between leadership and other means, such as power or formal authority, by which people can be made to act: the example of the Vietnam War. In that war the United States had clear superiority in resources and technology. The main dimension they lacked in comparison to the other side was motivation. Burns demonstrates (with additional examples) how motivation can be crucial in modes of action and use of resources. According to Burns, leadership is first and foremost an influence on motivation and morality.

The notion of "influence" transcends most conceptual frameworks of leadership. Bryman (1986), in a book reviewing leadership, wrote: "The common elements in (most) definitions of leadership imply that leadership involves a social influence process in which a person steers members of the group towards a goal" (p. 2). A similar view was presented by Kotter (1988), who saw leadership as a "process of moving a group (or groups) of people in some direction through non-coercive means" (p. 16).

The theme of influence by noncoercive means is central to the definition of leadership, whether in politics or in organizations. The dominant orientation is to make people act by noncoercive means. Paradoxically, this was aptly expressed by a distinct representative of the military, an organization perceived (often mistakenly) as making people act mainly by giving

orders, Dwight Eisenhower. It was General, later President, Dwight Eisenhower who formulated the much-quoted definition: "Leadership is the ability to decide what is to be done, and then to get others *to want* to do it" (Larson, 1968, p. 21).

"Influence," in the sense of internalization of values (Burns, 1978), inspiring people through vision or ideas (Bass, 1985), and building trust (Bass, 1999; Lapidot & Shamir, 2001) are the major themes in the literature dealing with leadership in the modern era. These themes are totally different from the way people were moved to act in earlier periods of human history. Figures such as Herod, Nero, and Julius Caesar, who are described as leaders in history books, made people act by coercion and performed acts that are perceived today as unreasonable (such as openly using their followers to build palaces for their mistresses). If they behaved like that in Western democracies today, they would be summarily deposed. Thus, the essential difference between what was described as leadership in earlier periods of history and leadership in the modern era after the "spring of nations" is the centrality of "willing influence," of persuasion. This, as Burns (1978) argues, is the essence of the distinction between leadership and rulership. In these terms, according to Burns, many figures described in the literature as leaders were simply rulers.

It is not always easy to distinguish clearly between rulers and leaders. When people obey somebody because he possesses official authority, whether he is a king, a manager, or a senior officer, it is hard to discern whether they are acting out of free will or fear of punishment or injury by the bearer of authority. However, there are many situations in which leadership is clearly recognized, particularly situations where the official authority or control of resources (such as technological know-how) are clearly not the important factors that can explain the event, or more precisely, the difference in events. Working extremely hard or charging into battle after a commander (without coercion) are things often done out of faith in an idea or in specific people; in other words, in response to influence and not to authority or power.

I personally had occasion to see the added value of influence in dozens of comparative observations I conducted in the course of my work on companies of infantry soldiers in an identical training course. All of them have commanders of the same military rank, of similar age, with identical military training and education, and the same amount of resources (ammunition, equipment, etc.). The soldiers are characterized by similar demographic background and motivation, the companies follow the same training program. Briefly, everything is identical just as in a laboratory experiment. Nevertheless, one particular company stands out in its motivation, and therefore in its achievements. These differences stem mainly from the commanders' *influence*. This is not their official authority (which

others possess, too) nor extra resources. It is their personal leadership, namely, their distinctly personal ability to influence.

Historical discussions of leadership often contain many misconceptions, confusing authority and power with influence. The reason for this confusion is what I call "period bias," which has great weight in the conceptualization of social phenomena in general and leadership phenomena in particular. To illustrate this inherent bias, let us take three theories whose imprint on the major areas of discussion in the social sciences is uncontested: the theories of Malthus, Karl Marx, and Sigmund Freud.

Malthus (in Schwartz, 1986), who lived from 1766 to 1834 in Europe, saw around him thousands of people dying of starvation because there was not enough food. Obviously, it was this reality that he witnessed daily that led him to formulate his famous theory (which, as is known, influenced Darwin) that population growth is much more rapid than the growth of food sources, and therefore "only the strong will survive". Presumably Malthus would not have formulated this theory if he had witnessed the destruction of food surpluses in order to maintain the price level for farmers, a common occurrence today in developed countries, where 3% of the population produce a surplus of food.

Karl Marx's *Communist Manifesto* (Marx & Engels, 1968) represents similar types of argument. Marx's theoretical formulation is based on the reality (portrayed so vividly by authors like Dickens) whereby those owning the means of production exploited the workers who were alienated from their work and had "nothing to lose but their chains." Is this the theory that Marx would have formulated if he had regularly seen young people stipulating that they would work in an organization on condition that they received stock options before starting in the job? Would he have chosen "alienation" as a central concept in his theory if he had constantly seen around him "workaholics" who often took their work home even against the wishes of the management?

Psychological theories dealing with the individual, his nature, and his motives also exemplify period bias. For example, Freudian theory, which still has great influence in the Western world almost a hundred years after it was first formulated, underwent "revisions" in the neo-Freudian versions that may be attributed to the changing times. Freud, who grew up in the Vienna of the late 19th century, like most children at that time saw his father as a remote, perhaps even frightening, figure, whom one addressed as "sir." The father was not a person with whom one played football, tumbled around on the carpet, or played toy trains. With this kind of relationship it was only natural that Freudian theory should place so much weight on the super-ego. It is a fact that the theories of later psychoanalysts, especially the Americans among them (e.g., Sullivan, 1953), place much less emphasis on the super-ego.

The same general argument applies to theories and models of leadership. What did Carlyle, a man of the 19th century, see in his period and in the history that preceded it? He saw kings' courts, princes, aristocrats, knights, warriors, and eminent artists. Most of the population were oppressed and cowed, lacked all rights, and clearly did not participate in the shaping of historical processes. The wars, the conquests, and even the cultural and artistic activities of people, such as Leonardo da Vinci or Michelangelo, were conducted through the courts of kings and barons. In such circumstances it was not possible to reach any other conclusion than that formulated by Carlyle. However, this reality, as mentioned, has changed dramatically since the "spring of nations."

The shift from rulership to leadership is evident not only in history but in every aspect of life. With the development of democratic and liberal awareness (Fukuyama, 1992), and as the changing market conditions open up possibilities to people in various spheres of action (Moskowitz, 1988), it becomes increasingly clear that control by authority rooted in ancestral rights (monarchy, etc.) or by force (e.g., conquering armies) is not enough. More than ever before, the awareness resonates that models of leadership are simply models of influence constructed in complex psychological processes whereby both the leader and the followers are important (Klein & House, 1995; Popper, 2001). The theoretical and practical implications of this point are discussed in the conclusion to this chapter.

COGNITIVE BIASES

The massive research effort throughout the history of the psychological study of leadership focused mostly on the leader's aspects (e.g., style) as the independent variable (Bass, 1990; Stogdill, 1974). In recent years there has been growing criticism of the "leader-centric" perspective (e.g., Meindl, 1995; Meindl, Ehrlich & Dukerich, 1985). Unlike the traditional perspective, the new approaches argue that leadership is very much in the eyes of the followers. As Meindl claims: "Followers, not the leader, and not researchers, define it" (1995, p. 131). There is growing discussion and research on leadership from the followers' angle (e.g., Klein & House, 1995; Lord, Fotti, & Devader, 1984) in an effort to unravel the systematic aspects in the process of "constructing leaders."

The argument that I wish to propose (and illustrate below) is that although inclusion of the followers in the discussion and research in leadership is a very important development (and matches the historical process presented in the previous section), in practice, as these things are presented and studied today, there are inherent biases in the followers' perception and image of the leader. In most cases these biases magnify the

leaders in the followers' eyes to the extent of deification in certain circumstances. Following is a review of the more important cognitive biases in the construction of images of leadership.

The Fundamental Attribution Error

In a well-known experiment, Ross, Amebile, and Steinmatz (1977) conducted a quiz among their subjects. The participants were divided arbitrarily into two groups: one group posing the questions and the other answering them. The questioners were instructed to find particularly hard questions; they were entitled to ask questions on subjects that the other team could not possibly know. An audience observed the allocation of roles and the quiz, and they knew that the role distribution was random. Nevertheless, they attributed more knowledge to the questioners than to the answering team, ignoring the simple fact that the questioners' advantage stemmed solely from the role they had been assigned at random. In other words, anyone could have successfully filled the role of questioner and gained the advantage. This research illustrates a cognitive bias known as "the fundamental attribution error," whereby people tend to see behavior as deriving from the characteristics of the performer and to minimize, or even ignore, information regarding situational factors. This bias might have significant meaning when it comes to analysis of leadership from the point of view of the followers. For example, regular public opinion polls and even expert analysis of the population's trust in senior role-bearers, such as the President of the United States, and its perception of their functioning, indicate that the trend of trust rises substantially *after* the president is elected to office (Popper, 2001). There are examples showing that changes that occurred in the American economy as a result of external changes were attributed to the new president before the president-elect had even had time to enter his office and make decisions (Calder, 1977).

Cognitive psychologists refer to concepts such as "heuristics" (rules of thinking, interpreting, judging), schema, prototypes, attributions, and similar mental constructs that help the individual to "interpret the world." This process is active from the point of view of the individual and based on "cues" that the individual receives. Some cues are of particular relevance to magnifying leaders in the eyes of the beholder, or in cognitive psychological terms, some cues particularly enlarge attribution biases. Following are some major aspects and examples demonstrating such processes.

Symbolic Attribution Biases

In his work, sociologist Edward Shills (1965) distinguishes between "center" and "periphery." This refers to a symbolic center, which certain people are regarded as better able to represent than others. The more they are perceived as typical representatives of the symbolic center, the more they can be seen as leaders. Israel's late premier, Yitzhak Rabin, can serve as a case in point. Rabin, with his lifelong involvement in national security and his background in the pioneering community, could be seen as a personification of the value of the state during its formative years, and as such he was easily perceived as a leader. Another salient example in support of this argument is the reverence in the United States for political figures from the Kennedy family, who represent in the eyes of the public a concrete manifestation of the American dream.

The "guru phenomenon" (Shamir, 1991) in various spheres represents another example of the symbolic center argument. The Maharishi in India, the Baba Sali among Moroccan Jewry, or the Lubavicher Rabbi are all perceived as figures with closer links than others to symbolic and spiritual centers, and thus possess great powers, sometimes transcendental ones. This is a specific variation of a process of attribution by the followers, a process that does not necessarily involve real acquaintance with the leader.

Attributions Resulting from Social Distance

As stated, images of leadership are not necessarily derived from actual acquaintance with the leader, nor from concrete facts related to the leader. On the contrary, the greater the distance and the less direct contact with the leader, the easier it is to turn him or her into a "desired subjective creation".

This claim was demonstrated by Shamir (1995), who conducted a study among 320 students. The students were asked to choose two types of leaders: a close leader, namely, one with whom the subjects had face-to-face contact (those chosen for this category were typically youth movement leaders, military commanders, or school teachers) and a distant leader, with whom they never had close contact (typical leaders in this group were people like Ben-Gurion, the founder of the State of Israel). The subjects' attitudes toward the two categories of leaders were collected through interviews and thoroughly coded and analyzed. In general, it was found that the distant leaders were perceived in a much more stereotyped manner as figures "larger than life," as Shamir put it, leaders with characteristics different from those of close leaders. The general conclusion is that when the followers get nearer to the leader and are in close contact with him he

becomes a creature of flesh and blood with vices and virtues rather than a stereotyped attribution.

These examples illustrate the two extremes presented at the beginning of this paper. The more distant the leader, or the more he or she represents broad sociological or social psychological aspects (such as a religious leader to his believers), the more the leader is a "romantic figure." On the other hand, the closer and more concrete the leaders, the more they are examined and evaluated on their *behaviors*. It may, therefore, be said that when we deal with close leadership such as exists in organizations, the theory of leadership is more *behavioristic* in nature. And in fact, major models such as the Full Range Model of Leadership (Bass, 1985; Bass & Avolio, 1990) yielded tools that measure specific behaviors or statements (see, e.g., the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire; Bass & Avolio, 1996). An illustration of this can be seen in the analysis of the Full Range Model. The model includes four factors of transformational leadership: idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration. Analysis of these factors indicates that they are composed of very specific behavioral items, some of which cannot find expression in leadership that is distant and relates to thousands of people. The typical example of this is individualized consideration. The items included in this measure are: "I spend time teaching and coaching," "I treat others as individuals rather than just as members of groups," "I consider an individual as having different needs, abilities, and aspirations from others," "I help others to develop their strengths."

Looking at these items, it is self-evident that these behaviors can *only* be expressed by close leaders who can see, meet, and above all, know their followers well, and can behave toward them differentially according to their evaluation of the followers and their needs. This is a type of relationship that can exist in small settings (Popper & Mayseless, 2001). Practically speaking, distant leaders, such as political leaders, cannot give expression to such specific behaviors in the way described in this factor. Their influence operates in emotional circles that are more primary and symbolic, shared by broad circles (Popper, 2001; Shamir, 1991).

It seems, therefore, that we need more precise distinctions for this discussion. In other words, the discussion is not on the degree of relevance of the romantic approach, whose orientation is toward the processes of building images of leaders, or of the empirical behaviorist approach, which is oriented toward measuring behaviors at the observational level. It is not a question of a dichotomy, but of situations and conditions (which need to be defined much more clearly than we know how to do at present) in which these general orientations in explaining the leadership phenomenon have a different relevance. On the face of it, based on the findings of research such as that of Shamir (1995), it may be argued that leadership in

the political sphere is more oriented toward the romantic wishes of the followers, while leadership in organizations directs the discussion to the more behavioral aspects related to the effectiveness (in terms of outcome variables) of the leader's functioning. In my opinion, many of the misconceptions regarding leadership stem from uncontrolled and inappropriate "import" of leadership images and conceptions taken from the political and historical spheres, into the discussion and research on leadership in organizations. An illustration of this is the analysis of attitudes toward the ethical dimension of leadership. The ethical dimension was central in the theory developed by Burns (1978), a political historian who invented the concept "transforming leadership" in relation to political leaders. In fact, according to Burns, the moral dimension is at the heart of the change created by transformational leaders. Yet, when these concepts of Burns were translated into models and tools related to leadership in organizations, the effect of leadership in the moral dimension decreases and the main transformation is deflected toward classic motivation of the Maslow (1970) type. Thus, we see the use of identical terms to describe concepts that are essentially different at the organizational and political levels of discussion.

Cognitive Cultural Biases

One of the salient sources that explains differences in leadership perception is culture. Culture, as Hofstede (1997) states, is "mental programming" elaborated out of a person's experiences in the family, at school, in youth groups, at the workplace—in short, out of all the components usually included in the notion "social environment." Culture in this sense determines people's heroes, preferred activities, gestures, objects with particular emotional meanings, and so forth. The metaphors of culture as "mental programming" or "software of the mind" make it possible to base analyses of leadership perception on the vast literature written on social cognition.

The key notion in social cognition theory and research is the *schema*, defined as a cognitive structure that reflects the active construction of reality, where individuals create meaning and add onto it raw data of the objective world. Organized prior knowledge shapes what is perceived and remembered (Fiske & Taylor, 1984). People tend to use preexisting schemas to draw inferences about data rather than examining the data carefully. For example, in the leadership domain, some studies indicated that subjects don't literally have to have had direct experience with the leaders to describe them (Rush, Thomas & Lord, 1977).

Since culture is "software of the mind," namely, a collection of schemas created in certain social environments (Hofstede, 1997) that supply avail-

able and representative stimuli, it is likely that perceptions of leaders and "naive" implicit theories of leadership are to a large extent culturally based. In other words, leadership prototypes stored in the mind may differ among people of different cultures. Moreover, these prototypes can color the behaviors of the assessed leader to the point where it is hard to distinguish the leader's actual behaviors from the "cultural attributions" related to the leader by followers as a result of different cultural origins. Support for the latter statement may be found in Pfeffer's (1983) organizational demography model, as well as Schneider's (1987) attraction model. According to Pfeffer, the demographic composition of organizations (race, religion, etc.) affects perceptions in organizations. Schneider argues that members of organizations are attracted to other members whom they see as similar to themselves. Thus, homogeneity of values and cultural backgrounds might count most significantly in determining perceptions of leadership in organizations.

Some cross-cultural studies support this line of argument. Smith, Misumi, Tayeb, Peterson, and Bond (1989) found that leaders' consideration and task style emerged as universally relevant dimensions across several different cultures, but that the way followers evaluated actual leaders' behaviors in terms of these styles differed across cultures. For example, a leader who discussed a follower's personal problems with others in his or her absence was viewed as considerate in Japan but as invading the follower's privacy in the United States.

Gerstner and Day (1994) compared perceptions of leadership among populations of students in eight countries. They asked the students to grade 59 characteristics of leadership that had been found in various research studies. They found very little agreement among the students concerning these characteristics. It was not possible to identify core images of leadership on which there was clear agreement. Moreover, of the first five leadership traits graded in the American sample not one was found in the top five places in the other samples.

It can be argued that in cross-cultural studies on leadership, subjects generally arrive at their views by thinking about leaders known to them from their own country and culture, and, of course, these figures themselves may differ substantially from each other. Thus, the followers' views in the intercultural comparison may, in fact, reflect actual differences between the leaders themselves rather than perceptions of leadership prototypes.

A recent Israeli study attempted to overcome these limitations. The study, conducted in a factory, examined workers' leadership perceptions regarding the same manager (Popper & Druyan, in press). This research design made it possible to isolate the possible differences between the leaders themselves and to focus on the followers' perceptions and attributions of leadership per se. The difference between the followers was cultural;

some of them were new immigrants from the former Soviet Union and some were veteran Israelis. The subjects were paired for matching in terms of background variables. The findings do reveal differences in the perception of the same leader. In general, immigrants from the former Soviet Union were found to have more respect for authority and hence have different leadership prototypes.

Thus far I have reviewed briefly some cognitive biases, which are proven to be involved in the creation of perceptions and images of leaders. However, there are also analyses from other areas in psychology, which, although not empirically supported, present argumentation supporting the existence of a tendency among followers to "magnify" and even aggrandize their leaders. This tendency stems from inherent needs of the followers themselves, not necessarily from direct contact or real acquaintance with the leader.

The most basic explanation stems from the dynamics in the family, where big, strong figures take care of helpless babies. In other words, the longing for a big, strong, protective figure is ingrained in us as a primary, instinctive pattern. Freud regarded the attraction to leaders as the longing for a primary father figure (1939, pp. 109–111): "It is longing for the father," wrote Freud, "which is common to all humans, from their childhood days. Now it may become clear to us that the characteristics that we attribute to the great person are the characteristics of parents, and that the essence of the greatness of great people lies in this convention." The core of this explanation is the psychological mechanism defined by Freud as "transference." Transference takes place when a person perceives another and reacts to him as if he were a dominant figure from his past (his father, for example). Thus, according to Freud, at the unconscious level the leader represents the ancient father.

The weakness of such explanations is, of course, that they are not grounded in empirical research, or at least in studies that are accepted in the (quantitative) mainstream of research, and therefore they are perceived as speculative and controversial. Indeed, it is difficult to measure unconscious processes, but it is also hard to ignore the fact that most people are born and grow up into and within an asymmetrical psychological pattern in which there are "authoritative adults" who determine what is permitted and what is forbidden, and particularly (in the eyes of the viewer, the small child) have immense power both to hurt and to protect. These dynamics are the inherent basis, according to many writers (e.g., Fromm, 1941), of the asymmetrical relations existing in later periods. The dominant expression of such relationships is, of course, leader–follower relations.

Thus it appears that there were good reasons for the fact that the major paradigms in the history of the study of leadership were criticized and

underwent changes. Heifetz (1994) was disappointed with the focus on examination of the leaders' qualities (which stemmed from the romantic view), because it was incomplete and inconsistent in its findings (Bryman, 1986). On the other hand, a research approach that focuses on the followers is apt to reveal, as shown in the present article, biases of the leadership phenomenon. Thus, there appears to be a need for another approach that relates both to the leader and the followers and does not a priori ascribe more weight to one side or another. The approach proposed here is to view leadership as relationship. This kind of view has far-reaching implications. I now examine the conceptual and methodological implications of this angle of vision.

LEADERSHIP AS RELATIONSHIP

The view of leadership as relationship embraces the three components of the leadership phenomenon: leaders, followers, and the context in which these relationships are formed, and thus gives more expression to the complexity of leadership, avoiding the inherent biases analyzed above.

This direction affords a more diversified way of looking at a phenomenon so complex and dynamic as leadership, and thus leads to a variety of research methods. Following are some of the advantages of this approach.

Dynamic and Contextual Aspects

The shift to the view of leadership as relationships rather than exclusively as the influence of a "great leader," on the one hand, or as the followers' perception of the leader that is largely the product of their desires (as shown above), on the other hand, is similar to the shift that has taken place in the psychodynamic theoretical thinking regarding object relations (e.g., Klein, 1932). This is a shift to a form of thinking that argues that the relationship itself is the psychological essence; this is the important unit to analyze. There have been attempts in the literature to conceptualize leadership in terms of relationships, for example, vertical dyadic linkage (VDL) theory (Dansereau, Graen, & Haga, 1975), which was the precursor of leader–member exchange (LMX) theory (Graen & Uhi-Bien, 1995). All these models and theories emerge from similar assumptions, namely that leader-follower relations are based on exchanges that are conscious, and instrumental both for the leader and the followers.

My argument is that some leadership relationships (especially the intensive ones, often labeled under terms such as "charismatic relations") are emotional and in many cases rooted in unconscious foundations. Further-

more, the stronger the unconscious emotional foundations, the more intensive the relations between leaders and followers. In recent years we see the beginning of an approach to leader–follower relations based on these aspects. For example, Lindholm (1988) sees great similarity between leadership and romantic love. Just as the lover may project onto the beloved the qualities he wants to see in him or her (which he or she does not necessarily possess) so may the followers do with the leader.

Just to illustrate, a person whose sources of motivation to lead are narcissistic, the kind of leader defined in the literature as a personalized charismatic leader (House & Howell, 1992), will seek mainly from his followers the adoration he lacks due to his narcissistic deprivation. On their side, those who are attracted to such a leader may be people who seek objects of adoration out of their own narcissistic deprivation; that is, their need to be attached to a "grandiose person" that also aggrandizes them (Popper, 1999; Post, 1986). The relationships thus formed are of a distinct nature, which is peculiar to specific kinds of followers and leaders. This kind of relationship may be found in certain sects, and cannot necessarily be generalized to other people and other contexts (Popper, 2001).

Another illustration of the emotional component of leadership is presented by Aberbach (1995), through examples of leaders who are ostensibly so different as to be completely incompatible with their followers. For example, Herzl, a modern secular Jew who lived in Vienna and Paris, was the hero of East European Jewry, who were religiously orthodox and spoke mostly Yiddish, and whose entire cultural-psychological world was totally different from that of Herzl. Garibaldi, the Italian national leader, was in fact of French origin, and Hitler was an Austrian who in no way represented the Germanic symbolic center (Shills, 1965). These examples (and others discussed by Aberbach) illustrate and emphasize the emotional basis, which is not immediately evident at first glance. In the specific examples analyzed by Aberbach the emotional link is rooted in the dynamics of trauma. In certain traumatic circumstances there are leaders who represent to the followers the ability to overcome traumas. These leaders have personal experience, or as Aberbach expresses it, are schooled in coping with that trauma; they both understand the nuances of the trauma and represent success in coping with it. In this context we can understand how Herzl, the successful man of the world, represented success in coping with the humiliation, oppression, and anti-Semitism that were the lot of millions of Jews in Eastern Europe. Similarly, Hitler, who had built himself out of the ruins of his miserable childhood (Fest, 1974), could in his emotional rhetoric (fed by his experiences) offer a way to overcome the terrible psychological situation that prevailed in Germany between World War I and World War II.

Popper and Mayseless (2001) deal specifically with the relations that characterize transformational leadership, arguing that the processes of influence that exist in these relationships are similar to those existing in good parenthood. Parents, like transformational leaders, are perceived as "stronger and wiser" and as having emotional influence not only in their specific behavior, but in their general essence, their occupations, their life story, their conjugal relations, their social and political outlook, and so forth. Furthermore, the fact that children live with their parents in physical and psychological proximity creates processes of transference, which is a very powerful socializing psychological process. The mutual aspect in this relationship is based on a complementary system that, according to some theories (e.g., Bowlby, 1969), activate the caregiver (usually, the parents). According to the tenets of these theories, parents' main function is the protection and development of the person whose well-being is sought.

Leadership, then, can be characterized by various typologies of relationships, each of them being a reflection of both sides' needs for their own dynamics (which may also change). Furthermore, the circumstances in which the relationship exists may affect its nature. For example, the influence of crisis situations on the longing for leadership and for a certain type of relationship with the leader has been described extensively in the literature (Heifetz, 1994; Popper, 2001; Shamir & Howell, 1999). For example, there are researchers who believe that crisis is the soil that yields charismatic leaders who form relations of dependence with their followers (e.g., Hertzber, 1940; Hunt, Boal, & Dodge, 1999). Shamir and Howell (1999), basing themselves on Mischel's (1977) distinction between "weak and strong psychological situations," argue that in situations where the tasks and the rules of the game are clear (a strong psychological situation) there will be relationships that may be characterized as transactional relations, that is, instrumental relations of give and take. Such relationships may be common between leaders and followers in a stable business context. On the other hand, when the situation is vague, sensitive, and unpredictable (a weak psychological situation), the relations between the leader and the followers are likely to be more emotional or, in the authors' words, more charismatic. These characteristics may be present in military combat situations (Popper, 1996) or in organizations in a state of crisis (Shamir & Howell, 1999).

These arguments and examples will suffice to sum up my central argument that viewing leadership as relationship permits fuller expression of phenomena characterized by the following:

1. Interaction between the sides that expresses and reflects at least partly the characteristics and desires (conscious and unconscious) of both sides.

2. Dynamism and development along diverse lines of time and events.
3. It takes place within diverse social, ideological, cultural, and technological contexts, and this variety affects the dynamics of the relationship.

This complexity of the phenomenon calls for conceptualization suited to dynamic processes and methodologies that permit research beyond static photography of the variables at a given moment. For this purpose we need to examine the research aspects of leadership as relationship.

Methodological Research Aspects

In a paraphrase of Molière's famous statement that he had spoken prose for 40 years without knowing it, we can say that there were studies many years ago that examined complex leadership processes without being defined as leadership studies. Some of these studies contributed to conceptualization in many areas connected with the social sciences, including leadership. For example, the famous Hawthorne studies and Whyte's (1943) study on street-corner gangs were not planned from the start as studies examining leadership variables, but we know today in retrospect that they contributed a great deal to the study of leadership. Such studies created the conceptual infrastructure for the view of leadership as exchange relations (e.g., Homans, 1949) and for the understanding of the importance of leadership in collective processes (Shamir, 1991). Later research, for example, leadership in small groups (e.g., Cartwright & Sander, 1968) started from a point of departure that defined research questions on leadership more specifically, and generally assumed orientations of the relations that were examined in quantitative studies.

From the historical examples of research, we can characterize relative advantages of qualitative and quantitative studies. The former have the advantage of initial exploration of complex and dynamic, particularly those investigated in their natural environment, while the latter appear to have a relative advantage in examining clearly defined research questions, permitting the formulation of specific hypotheses (Erlandson, Harris, Skipper, & Allen, 1993), particularly in experimental research conditions. This basic approach means that when we define leadership in terms of relationship we have to use (at least partly) qualitative research methods. The reason for this lies, of course, in the paradigm of observation previously described, that is, observing a phenomenon that is dynamic, has elements of social influence, and is related to change (e.g., Parry, 1998).

Qualitative research, particularly of the kind called grounded theory (Glaser, 1992; Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Parry, 1998) largely meets the needs of the "leadership as relationship" paradigm. It is based on observing peo-

ple in their natural territory, interacting with them in their own language and terms. It is holistic, that is to say, it emphasizes context and draws its data from the natural layout. But the data do not serve to confirm or refute existing theories. The process is a dynamic one in which the stages of collecting and analyzing data occur simultaneously (Van Maanen, 1982). Furthermore, qualitative research ascribes importance to the meaning of things in the eyes of the subjects investigated and tries to discover regularity in their thinking, hence in such research it is possible to arrive at deeper understanding of the phenomenon examined.

The main debate with regard to qualitative research concerns generalizability, validity, and reliability. This is not the place to deal with the methodological aspects of the discussion; I will merely say that the method should not dictate the study, as happens too often in my opinion. On the contrary, the research method should be derived from the subject investigated and the research aims. Therefore, I wish to point out that whereas quantitative (mainstream) approaches tend to generalize across frequencies, qualitative approaches, particularly grounded theory, emphasize theory development rather than testing of a theory (Hunt & Ropo, 1995).

This distinction makes it possible to take advantage of each approach according to the basic aims of the research, but it appears to have gotten lost, among other reasons perhaps because quantitative research is the mainstream, it is what is accepted for publication in prestigious journals. Thus, a situation has developed wherein our ability to study specific phenomena at the behavioral level of leadership has improved beyond compare, and yet our understanding of the essence of the phenomenon "most observed but least understood on earth" (Burns, 1978) remains vague. This is described by researchers with more than a modicum of sarcasm as: "We know more and more about less and less until in the end we will know everything about nothing." In other words, before we dive into the depths of a phenomenon, we should recognize its boundaries and its essence at a basic conceptual level. It is doubtful whether quantitative methods can do this. With regard to the study of leadership, only observation directed at the depth of the phenomenon (not oriented toward generalization at the first stage) and analysis of the results at the level of the event itself with all its elements, leaders, followers, and circumstances, can advance the discussion at the level of paradigmatic analysis. This may be compared to a set of pairs of spectacles with lenses of different colors, when each pair of spectacles can be focused separately. By taking a certain pair of spectacles one decides how one will see reality, in what color and what configurations. The space of the observer is in the details, which can be enlarged by focusing the lens, so that many more details can be seen.

If we look through different lenses we examine reality from different angles. When a number of people do this they may reach agreement

regarding the lenses that reflect the accepted reality. It seems to me that the analogy is clear: qualitative research is like a set of lenses through which we try to clarify the nature of the reality upon which we agree: construction of the conceptual base. The lenses chosen for the purpose of zooming in on the reality investigated are quantitative research, which shows us nuances within a given phenomenon. It is my hope that this chapter offers another lens, a lens of relationship, for the understanding and analysis of leadership phenomena.

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CHAPTER 2

AESTHETICS IN LEADERSHIP

From Absent Bodies to Social Bodily Presence

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ABSTRACT

We seek to explore in this chapter the nature of the "social" in the leadership process. We find that mainstream leadership theory treats the social mainly as a cognition, as a mindful activity of people influencing each other. Our view draws on the aesthetic perspective to organizational life, on philosophical understanding of different modes of knowing, and on our scholarly observations in professional settings such as dance, music, and science. We argue for the importance of bodily knowledge and bodily presence in understanding social relations in the workplace. We found two different aesthetic conceptualizations of leadership: "the beauty of geometry" and the "the beauty of the living body." The beauty of geometry promotes the mainstream, traditional, hierarchy-based social influence between the leader and the follower where harmony is eventually targeted. The beauty of the living body emphasizes the body as an active subject and the importance of social bodily presence. Among other things, we found listening as a key bodily skill of leadership. We suggest that the aesthetic, bodily perspective would further the discussion of leadership as a relational, social process where everyday

practice in the workplace is characterized by multiple voices, arguments, and negotiation.

ABSENT BODIES IN ORGANIZATIONS AND LEADERSHIP

Almost like an unwanted and unwelcome guest, the living body has largely been ignored in leadership and organization studies. The "bodylessness" of leadership theories is reflected in ways of how people, both leaders and followers, are treated as "human resources" abstracted from their concrete, living bodies that sense, experience, and reflect with other human bodies. Long before computer-generated cyberspace and virtual communities of avatar representations, leadership theories have discussed organization merely as virtual entities where sensuous living bodies are absent. While the body is the most abiding and inescapable presence in our lives, the world of leadership theories has paid little attention to the bodily presence of people in organizations. New communication technologies may protect us from direct corporeal engagement with the outer world and other people. Via machines, we are disinvested of work that once belonged to the muscles and the senses. Telecommunication and transportation allow us to transcend what used to be the natural limits imposed by the body (Leder, 1990). But we are still bodies, not avatars in virtual communities.

We argue in this chapter that absent living bodies have become haunt in leadership and organization studies. Until living bodies are recognized, our understanding of social relations remains incomplete. We seek to explore the nature of the "social" in leadership process. We find that mainstream leadership theory treats the social mainly as a cognition, as a mindful activity of people influencing each other. Well-known and extensively used leadership textbooks by respected scholars, such as Yukl (1998), Whetten and Cameron (1998), and Quinn, Faerman, Thompson, and McGrath (1996) (whose work we highly respect in many regards) seem to be in the forefront to disseminate and enhance the cognitive emphasis of leadership competence. The nature of social processes in leadership is mostly seen as a functional, purposeful, and guided action by outside, organizational or contextual principles and objectives. Leaders and followers are to represent their positions; they are acquired and trained to exercise different roles according to situational demands, in order to achieve controlled and coordinated activity for the benefit of the organization. Harmony and balance are eventually targeted in most leadership theories; annoying contingencies need to be identified and eliminated; conflicts need to be managed constructively to keep people happy and productive. To us, mainstream leadership thinking represents rather normative, idealistic patterns of what is supposed to be a "good life" in the workplace with

the inherent tendency to create heroic stories of leadership—and followership (for effective followership, see, e.g., Howell & Costley, 2001).

Our view of the social in leadership is fundamentally different from the above. We try to learn from the aesthetic perspective to organizations and managerial processes. We argue for the importance of bodily knowledge and bodily presence in understanding social relations in the workplace (see also Ropo & Parviainen, 2001). In relation to leadership, social bodily presence means to us the recognition of the value of human experience, reflection, and negotiation on what is going on in the workplace, instead of a priori knowing based on hierarchical or professional status. It also means that the social, bodily reality in the workplace involves roughness, dislikes, and arguments with enduring tension in leadership processes. To us, leadership is everyday practice, sometimes ugly, with less harmony and balance and lots of discomfort, dislike, and profound disagreement. Our view draws on the aesthetic perspective to organizational life, on philosophical understanding of different modes of knowledge, and on our scholarly observations in professional settings such as dance, music, and science. We develop two paradoxical ways to conceptualize aesthetics in leadership: one that we call the "beauty of geometry" and the other that we call the "beauty of the living body."

We find that social bodily presence has become vitally important to understand leadership in organizations that employ professionals and face the challenge of innovation and continuing improvement. It is the nature of professional work, the object of leadership, which give impetus to understand bodily knowledge in leading experts and expert organizations. Beyond highly sophisticated, explicit knowledge, many professions include a great deal of tacit knowledge; knowledge that develops over time in social interaction between individuals toward collective understanding of how to do things. Tacit knowledge becomes especially relevant in professions that involve bodily skills, such as playing an instrument, caring for people, dealing with customers, even doing research. Professional work today calls for working together, social experience, presence, communication, and evaluation, that is, it calls for the "social other."

Another aspect of professionals that challenges leadership competence is the overall characterization of experts in new organizational forms; how they see themselves, their work, and the social relations of leaders and followers (e.g., Clegg & Hardy, 1996). Professionals do not take hierarchies for granted. They want autonomy, respect, and responsibility (Løwendahl, 1997). Typically, professionals work to build their identity through work; they want to be appreciated as human beings and not just because of their market value; they work long hours with their body and soul, like committed entrepreneurs.

Third, it is typical that professional expert organizations are involved with complex problems that cannot be solved by leaders and managers only, or by individual experts only. People are expected to work and perform in new organizational forms, such as networks, cross-functional, and cross-cultural teams. These new ways of working call for bodily exposure and social bodily presence.

AESTHETICS IN ORGANIZATIONS, MANAGEMENT, AND LEADERSHIP

Aesthetics, introduced as an area of philosophy concerned with art and beauty, was developed in Germany in the 18th century. The word itself comes from the Greek *aisthesis*, and it means, very broadly, any kind of sensory experience, regardless of whether it is sensuous or artistic. Some contemporary aestheticians have begun to emphasize sensory experience and sensory knowledge, referring to the father of aesthetics, Alexander Gottlieb Baumgarten (Shusterman, 2000; Strati, 1999). Baumgarten conceived of aesthetics as one of the two components of the theory of knowledge: first, the logic that investigates intellectual knowledge, and second, aesthetics, the theory of beauty and the arts that investigate the knowledge of senses.

Aesthetics, organizations, and management are not necessarily the most likely partners in scholarly discourse. However, such an unusual combination can generate interesting results and discussions, which often happen at the crossroads of two disciplines or fields. One of the first indications of a possible union of the two can be traced back to as far as the 1930s. Surprisingly, Chester Barnard (1938, cited in Ottensmeyer, 1996) described the executive process of management as follows:

> The terms pertinent to it are "feeling," "judgement," "sense," "proportion," "balance," "appropriateness." It is a matter of art rather than science, and is aesthetic rather than logical.

Barnard was well ahead of his time to suggest that managerial work was more than logical thinking and rational decision making! Despite Barnard's wisdom, management thinking and leadership theory, in particular, have developed more toward science than art.

The aesthetic perspective to organizations and management originated in the mid-1980s, mainly as a protest to the positivist and rational paradigm that dominated organization and management thinking, as well as leadership theory. Aesthetics provided a good philosophical point to develop an alternative to the mainstream paradigm that emphasized logi-

cal, rational, and linear nature of organizational practices such as management and leadership. In 1985, a conference on the "corporate image" was organized in Antibes, France, by the Standing Conference on Organizational Symbolism (SCOS), which was an important step in the process of developing the field. The early articles were published in the SCOS journal *Dragon*. The new field called itself "organizational aesthetics" (e.g., Strati, 1989, 1999). The field has produced research on culture and symbolism in the context of organizations' image, logo, publicity material, and architecture (Buie, 1996; Gagliardi, 1990, 1996; Ramírez, 1991).

Another line of aesthetic organization research has been that of the arts and organizations. These studies have, for example, focused on creativity, management of arts organizations, and organizational and managerial practices to produce artistic outcomes (e.g., Björkegren, 1993; Guillet de Monthoux, 1993, 1996; Jacobson, 1996; Ropo & Eriksson, 1997; Rusted, 1998). Ottensmeyer (1996) describes some of the typical research questions as follows:

> The key questions seem to be: How might we bring art, artistry and beauty more explicitly into organization theories and management practices? For if we see people holding aesthetic values, organizations embodying aesthetic properties, and managerial work including an element of artistry, can we choose not to pay attention? (pp. 190–191)

Emma Stenström (2000) states that the worlds of art and business have indeed come closer to each other, at least in the level of discourse. In her extensive study of the arts and the business world in Sweden, she demonstrates how business is discussed in aesthetic terms, how art organizations have adapted business language, and how leadership is perceived as a romantic venture. It seems that the long-forgotten dimensions of leadership, such as feelings, intuition, and aesthetic judgments, are finally noticed again.

Strati (1996) also points out that aesthetics is an undeniable part of organizational experience and organizational reality. Management and leadership theories are explicitly more familiar with the discourse of control, profit, and effectiveness than with aesthetics. We, however, argue that an aesthetic dimension is always present in management and leadership practices as long as human beings are involved in social processes to accomplish something. We wish to open a discussion of aesthetics in leadership that goes beyond metaphorical reference to leaders as artists. We explore whether aesthetics could inform us about leadership and social processes in today's organizations, especially in those that employ people with highly educated and trained expertise, such as musicians, dancers, and scholars.

THE BEAUTY OF GEOMETRY IN LEADERSHIP THEORY

We think that many sources in management and leadership theory implicitly refer to a particular kind of aesthetics. Studies of management and leadership style encompass aesthetics of ways of leading and managing, which are beautiful in their own right. The rational and structuralistic paradigm of theorizing on organizations, management, and leadership stresses what might be called "the beauty of geometry." By this we refer to the ideals of standardization, formalization, and structure, among other things. The beauty of geometry reflects harmony and tendency toward formal coherence of parts (cf. Clegg & Hardy, 1996). Organization strategies and policies, project charts, and goal clarifications are typically illustrated as boxes and arrows. Presenting formal graphics of social processes are abstractions of an image of control, as if people could eventually be harnessed under corporate control.

Leadership has been defined in many different ways, but most definitions and theories of leadership share the assumption that leadership involves a social influence process whereby intentional influence is exerted by one person over other people in an attempt to structure the activities and relationships in a group or organization (for good coverage of leadership theories, see, e.g., Howell & Costley, 2001; Yukl, 1998). Given this ground rule, various leadership theories differ in many respects as who exerts the influence, the intended purpose of the influence, the manner in which the influence is exerted, and the outcome of the influence attempt.

Virtually all leadership theories underline the same type of rationale of social process in leadership influence. The rationale involves the emphasis first on cognitive skills of an effective leader, second on hierarchical status difference between the leader and the followers, and third on the purpose to influence and control follower activities to achieve outcomes toward group or organization's a priori goals and leadership effectiveness. These cornerstones—leader, cognition, influence, followers, hierarchy, control, goals, and effectiveness—have been softened or made somewhat vague in more recent leadership theories or perspectives (e.g., in different models of participative leadership, empowerment, self-managed teams, and spirituality of leadership). However, positivist paradigm and quantitative methodology is still "in the driver's seat" in leadership knowledge development, as put so eloquently by Bryman (1996). Dachler and Hosking (1995) have stated that even theories that emphasize "sharing" actually manipulate people's minds. Some scholars have called this kind of leadership "cultural colonialism" (Leavy & Wilson, 1994). Leadership is ultimately seen as an a priori definition of reality, and the social process between leaders and followers is about getting the followers to adopt that definition and behave accordingly.

As an example of what we mean by the beauty of geometry in leadership theory, we would like to provide a typical, rather generic way of conceptualizing leadership process. It involves the following elements: diagnosing the situation, identifying and modifying the followers to the situation, and matching the leader's style to the overall situation (see, e.g., Howell & Costley, 2001). Common to different leadership style suggestions (coaching, human relations, autocratic, transformational, visionary, transactional exchange, and servant leadership style) is the inherent assumption that the leader, even after follower consultation and frequent interaction, has the superior wisdom of what needs to be done. The followers are seen in this leadership paradigm as passive objects that are observed, evaluated, trained, and provided counseling services without being capable of developing anything new themselves. This view of leadership emphasizes the overarching dominance of hierarchical dominance and top-down rationality. To us, this represents one kind of aesthetics in leadership: the beauty of geometry.

Despite apparent pressure and some assuring evidence of change in structures and processes, organizations seem simultaneously to develop more layers to organize human energy (Whittington, Pettigrew, Peck, Fenton, & Conyon, 1999). Even new organizational forms, such as networks and cross-functional teams, may maintain the same or similar type of practices, meanings, and values over time. Leadership continually manifests itself as a standing order coming through the hierarchy, through the beauty of geometry as rational organizing of employees, production, and work environment.

The beauty of geometry as rationality at physical, linguistic, and conceptual levels in organizations should be studied by addressing its aesthetics. As Strati (1996) reminds us, aesthetics no longer concerns the organizational artifacts or the organization as a whole, but the manner in which organizational life (managerial practice, our emphasis) is understood.

BODY AS PASSIVE OBJECT VERSUS LIVING BODY

Cartesian dualism lives strongly even today. Since Descartes stressed the separation between body and mind, the dichotomy has persisted incredibly long. In this model, mind is the home of the intellect, the superior of these two, while body consists of emotions and feelings that can be unpleasant, and is inferior in nature. Mind gives orders to body, which then implements those orders. The attention that we give to the body tends to be negative reinforcement, like ascetic discipline, punishment, and forms of drilling, which are repetitive, mechanistic, and uniform. This notion of the body stresses its simplicity and permanence. In our everyday life, the body

as a thing is seen receiving stimuli from the brain, moved by the orders of the brain, which is the place where the mind, thinking, and the intellect are situated. We try to control the body to achieve the state in which the body's condition is "normal," "stable," "clean," and "healthy" (Parviainen, 1998, p. 23).

In Foucault's (1977) view, the body is shaped by disciplinary technologies. The body is treated as a passive, docile object. The conception of the body as a docile object has set the framework in which the body is constantly understood in leadership theory and practice. In the workplace, people are urged to control their bodies, for instance, by sitting for long hours at a time, by keeping a calm, firm hold over their emotion, and by remaining physically fit. The aim of these technologies is to forge a docile body that may be subjected, used, transformed, and improved. This is done in several related ways: through standardization of actions over time, through the control of space, and through drills and training the body (Rabinow, 1984). According to Foucault, architecture, for instance, is not built simply to be seen or observed as external space but to permit internal control. Environment, architecture, and design operate to provide a hold on our conduct and to carry the effects of power right to us. They may offer or limit possibilities for social interaction of people. Foucault discusses *body politics*, how the body is formed, controlled, and suppressed by the authority of institutions.

Conceptualizing the body as a passive object does not contribute to the body as an active subject. We receive the surrounding world through our eyes, ears, and hands. By and in our bodies we are capable of responding. The body described is never just an object, but the very medium whereby our world comes into being. Insofar as the body is reduced to its anatomy-physiological entity, the aspects of the body involving cognition and intentionality are commonly relegated to a substance called "mind."

Maurice Merleau-Ponty (1962), drawing upon the work of German philosopher Edmund Husserl (1960), has often utilized the distinction between the physical body ("Kõrper") and the living body ("Leib"). As Merleau-Ponty elucidated, it is our living body, not the intellectual mind, that first perceives objects, knows its way around a room kinesthetically, and senses the sadness in another's face. To overcome the body–mind distinction requires an inherently inseparable unity of spirit and flesh, understanding the human body as conscious in itself. Therefore, the starting point should not be the two substances for which we search a connection, but inherently one undivided unity. As Merleau-Ponty argues, "I am not in front of my body, I am in it, or rather, I am it" (p. 150). This human living body has an extraordinary capacity for imagination, abstract thinking, and memorizing.

The nature of a typical work organization involves a focus on rationality, objectivity, clear hierarchical relationships, and written rather than verbal discourse. Focusing on the beauty of geometry and treating the body as a docile object to be controlled, mainstream leadership theory has no access to understanding the living body. The inability to make a leap from the beauty of geometry as rationality into the living body's perspective is widespread in management. However, a line of thinking is developing among management and organization scholars that emphasizes all aspects of the human body while working in the organizational life (Daft & Lengel, 1998; Fineman, 1996; Ottensmeyer, 1996; Ramírez, 1966; Strati, 1996; White, 1996).

CALL FOR THE BEAUTY OF THE LIVING BODY IN PROFESSIONAL WORK AND LEADERSHIP

People in expert organizations, such as orchestras, dance, and drama theatres as well as research organizations, know their work most thoroughly at a sensual, bodily level, not to underestimate the cognitive aspect of these professions. In these professions, the body cannot be treated as a docile object, but the living body becomes the center of subjectivity, knowledge, and social relationships. Musicians, dancers, and scientists work on their self to achieve results, whether artistic or scientific. The core value of bodily social skills is common to all these professionals and their organizations. Hardly any musician, dancer, or scholar can rely solely on themselves today. Doing together, in relation to the "social other" has become a requirement in today's professional organizations. Sitting patiently, listening to colleagues, concentrating on playing, moving, reading, or writing are examples of bodily skills needed in professional collaboration. Beyond that, the body is inherent and present in experts' work through their social histories and experiences, and manifests itself in the motivation to pursue a particular professional activity, such as playing in an orchestra, dancing in an ensemble, or doing research in a collegial setting.

Our chapter takes on a task to return to the living body's potentialities for action, knowledge, and communication in expert organizations. Leaders of expert organizations are subject to the same exposure of the living body as are the other professionals. As we later discuss, they most often share the work with their colleagues. It is thus difficult to think that an expert organization could be successfully led without recognizing the meaning of the lived body of the colleagues and of the leader him/herself. Our argument is not that the living body is important in leadership as an added element or variable in contingency theory, like a new emphasis in the repertoire of leadership skills. Instead, we think that the living body's perspective has the potential to provide the beginnings of a new leadership

paradigm. We wish to suggest that it is the living body aesthetics in leadership that may challenge the mainstream leadership discourse that emphasizes cognition, control, hierarchy, and linear effectiveness by promoting more lateral and relational social processes of influence.

Our suggestion is that people know in many different ways—conceptually, emotionally, intuitively, and bodily. In fact, some recent cognitive theories define emotions as one form of knowledge, which eliminate the juxtaposition of reason and emotion. Some researchers in the fields of psychology and philosophy emphasize the "rationality of emotions," which means that emotions follow a logic of their own (Niiniluoto, 1996; Nussbaum, 1995). A more complete understanding of leadership knowledge requires that all modes of knowing are identified and characterized in leadership theory. Next, we try to clarify bodily knowledge as an essential element of leadership competence in expert organizations.

TACIT AND BODILY KNOWLEDGE

The term "tacit knowledge" has come to stand for "knowing how" that one cannot express in its fullness (Polanyi, 1969). In the last 30 years, the study of tacit knowledge has spanned over several disciplines in the social sciences, and its provenance in an earlier, natural philosophy is extensive (Sternberg & Horvath, 1999). It has been common to emphasize that much of the valuable knowledge that resides within organizations is tacit (Nonaka & Takeuchi, 1995). A broad range of phenomena have come to be grouped under the umbrella term "tacit knowledge" with the result that all vague and indefinite aspects of knowing are put into the black box of tacit knowledge.

It is challenging to share tacit knowledge with other people. Tacit knowledge is not easily expressible in words, and it often requires considerable time to acquire. It may, for instance, be gained during an apprenticeship or a period of "learning by doing." One feasible way to share tacit knowledge with others is through a process of demonstration, or "show-how" (Roberts, 2000). This show-how, showing others how to do things, requires social interaction between people. It also requires bodily presence, that is, the transmitter and receiver have to be present in the same location in order to learn.

We would like to identify one subtype of tacit knowledge, called "bodily knowledge" (Parviainen, 1998; Ropo & Parviainen, 2001). Polanyi (1966) stresses that tacit knowing achieves comprehension by indwelling. He argues that in any activity there are two different levels or dimensions of using and acquiring knowledge, which are mutually exclusive. Knowledge about the object or phenomenon in focus he calls "focal knowledge."

Knowledge that functions as a background to what is in focus is "tacit knowledge" (Polanyi, 1969). For instance, in reading a text, words and linguistic rules function as tacit subsidiary knowledge, while our attention is focused on the meaning of the text. In all our waking moments we rely on the awareness of contacts of our body with things outside in order to attend to these things. When we learn new skills with instruments, as playing the violin, we incorporate it in our body—or extend our body to include it—so that we come to dwell in it.

Much of our knowledge is gained in the course of "bodily negotiation" with the world, and that much of our knowledge is, indeed, constituted by these interactions, and lays the groundwork for absorbing and interpreting knowledge gathered by other means (O'Donovan-Anderson, 1997). Epistemic openness requires bodily sensitivity and responsiveness to the world. The living body acquires knowledge by doing, moving itself. Anyone who has spent any time with infants knows how basic movement "hammering" is in children; as soon as a child can grasp something, it has two simple tendencies: to put it in its mouth and use it to hit things. The child discerns the difference with the help of its lips and tongue, but also recognizes simultaneously tactile and kinesthetic differences. Gradually this "hammering" can reveal the powers and the limits not just of the hammer and the struck surface, but also of the infant itself; the different reactions of the hammer to different surfaces such as tables, faces, plates, and such.

Learning is not just aimless bodily negotiation, but practicing socially and culturally shaped expertise and bodily skills such as a musician's skill of playing an instrument in an orchestra, an actor's skill of playing various roles, a dancer's movement skill, or a scholar's skill to do research. Bodily knowledge does not imply the exposition of bodily skills, though there is an intimate correlation of bodily knowledge and bodily skills. As we know, movement skills may disappear because of an accident or the aging process. If we assume that knowledge of the moving body and performance of a bodily skill do not mean the same thing, then we can argue that an aging dancer or injured pianist still have bodily knowledge. Similarly, a scholar who may not be an active writer at present but has been one, still has the bodily knowledge of how to write and publish a scholarly article.

People in leadership positions, especially in expert organizations such as arts and science benefit from possessing the bodily knowledge required to perform the respective job. For instance, a conductor of a symphony orchestra is usually trained in one or sometimes several instruments before becoming a conductor. Based on this training, they know how the sound is produced and understand the interpretation, the articulations, and technical details of playing, and are thus better able to conduct the orchestra. To be engaged in a specific bodily practice, whether it is a dancer, a musician, or a scholar, may be almost a prerequisite of the credibility as a leader of

such an organization (Ropo & Parviainen, 2001). In the following section we describe how listening can be a core bodily practice in leadership.

LISTENING AS AN EXAMPLE OF AESTHETIC LEADERSHIP PROCESS WITH SOCIAL BODILY PRESENCE

Our observations of symphony orchestras suggest that musicians are experts in interaction, listening in particular (Koivunen, 2002; Köping, 1997). In their profession, they make use of auditive impulses and sounds, and transform them into aesthetic knowledge by concentrated, trained skills of listening and playing. The quality of their work is evaluated by listening, both by themselves, by fellow players, and by critics. Musicians listen to their own playing and to the sound of the whole orchestra, evaluate the sound, and respond to it by adjusting their own playing to the sound. In other words, musicians have a unique talent of listening and responding, which is an essential part of their profession.

From our senses, hearing has a receptive, communicative, and semiotic relationship to the world. Hearing demands acute attention to the moment and openness to the event, it is the most interior and the most direct in nature. Sounds have a direct impact on our bodies, producing immediate emotional effects. When sound pours into the hearer, sight, on the other hand, situates the observer outside of what one sees, at a distance. In seeing we are affected least of all, we can keep the world at a distance and control it. Hearing does not keep the world at a distance but admits it; we receive the sounds with our bodies. Sound is also a unifying sense, aiming at harmony and wholeness (Dewey, 1934; Levin, 1989; Ong, 1982; Welsch, 1997).

In addition to listening, musicianship in a symphony orchestra requires other sensual perceptive skills; the musicians have to use their eyes to look at the notes, to follow the conductor and the principal player, to listen to their own playing, to their instrument section's playing, and feel how everything is going. All this happens simultaneously. This calls for a complicated aesthetic knowledge and an ability to constantly make aesthetic judgements. The musicians also develop a skill to feel the quality of playing. Sometimes the playing goes extraordinarily well, a very special atmosphere is created, and musicians can collectively sense it. Musicians find the same level of consciousness and flow is reached (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990). If the playing goes badly, if there is a blockage somewhere, musicians can feel it in their bodies. If the music does not flow, playing becomes suffocating and heavy.

The beauty of geometry and the beauty of living body are both present in the operation of a symphony orchestra. The beauty of geometry is

clearly represented by strict hierarchy and detailed division of labor, the conductor being the absolute leader. The hierarchical organization is necessary for a full-scale symphony orchestra to function; each instrument section has its own music and it is the conductor's job to coordinate the whole. In this sense, the beauty of geometry would seem to be the dominating mode of rationality of symphony orchestra leadership. Yet, simultaneously, lateral relations among the musicians, including the conductor as a fellow musician, are very important. It is through these particular channels that the musicians negotiate the sound of a particular piece of music by playing their instruments. This relational process involves aesthetic and bodily knowledge of the musicians, who share their knowledge with the fellow players through sound, listening, and bodily gestures and movements. The beauty of living body is also an important mode of rationality in orchestras. Consequently, both modes of rationality are present at the same time, and paradoxically enough, it is working.

As noted above, conductors of a symphony orchestra are usually trained in musical instruments as well. This background helps them to understand the craft of playing and the formation of the sound. Needless to say, they can never know everything about playing all instruments of the orchestra, or about the individual musicians' bodily knowledge of playing. Conductors may have different strategies to lead the orchestra to desirable direction. They may try to impose a priori aesthetic ideas of playing a music piece to the orchestra. We argue that better results are expected, if conductors listen to the potentials of individual musicians and the orchestra as whole. Listening is a way to bring up the special, hidden potentials and the capacities of an orchestra. If the conductor listens actively and carefully to musicians' bodily knowledge and their style of playing, he or she may lead the sound of the orchestra to the direction that may surprise the musicians themselves with their own potentials of playing.

We have above emphasized the body's potentials for knowledge and communication in a social influence process, the role of listening in an expert organization, in particular. In the last section of this chapter, we want to discuss further the importance of social bodily presence as a prerequisite to leadership knowledge development in expert organizations.

SOCIAL BODILY PRESENCE AND DISTANCE IN LEADING EXPERTS

In many arenas the question of bodily presence or absence has triggered plenty of discussion. For instance, information technology has changed office work considerably in the past few years. Information, such as images, video clips, text, and data can now be easily transferred across great dis-

tances, through satellite television, the Internet, or computer-to-computer data. Distance work has become more common, employees do not need to go to the office every day. However, the transferability of knowledge, in particular tacit knowledge, has proven to be difficult through these technical devices. Roberts (2000) points out that a successful transfer of tacit knowledge usually requires socialization and face-to-face contact of the participants. In other words, bodily presence, that is, copresence and colocation between the transmitter and receiver, are required for sharing tacit knowledge. This is also our finding in international scholarly collaborations (Hunt, Ropo, & Eriksson, 1996).

Roberts (2000) explains that the use of technologically mediated communication, such as video conferencing or virtual project rooms, can aid the transfer of tacit knowledge. The successful exchange of knowledge requires trust and mutual understanding between the participants. The level of trust present in the economic environments varies between cultures and nations. The communication will be more successful when the participants share common social, cultural, and linguistic characteristics. It will be less effective when participants are from diverse backgrounds, particularly in the early stages of interaction. Nevertheless, such technologically facilitated communication cannot at present replace direct face-to-face contact; it will remain an assisting method. Even in successful use of technologically mediated communication, regular personal contact is necessary to maintain a satisfactory level of confidence and trust between team members.

Although the knowledge-based economy is highly dependent upon the capacities of new information technologies, they cannot replace or even significantly enhance certain forms of human interaction. The shortcomings of information technology are particularly acute in the case of tacit knowledge, which often requires colocation and copresence. Therefore, Roberts (2000) identifies the overemphasis on technology and codified data at the cost of tacit knowledge to be one of the main problems, seriously impeding the innovation processes in companies.

The requirement of social bodily presence is essential in symphony orchestras. Both the conductor and the musicians need to be present in rehearsals and concerts. Musicians can rehearse their individual parts at home, but have to come to the rehearsal for group playing. Conductors may well prepare the score at home but must naturally be at the rehearsal to transfer their ideas to the orchestra. Conductors cannot send an email or a fax message with instructions, they must be present. A great deal of the conductors' instructions to the orchestra requires bodily gestures and movements that are impossible to express verbally. Conductors need their body to convey all the meanings and phrases to the players. It is also part of their pro-

fessional ability to articulate with their bodies. This knowledge is clearly tacit in nature, and it varies considerably from one conductor to another.

A symphony orchestra is a unique organization also in a sense that its employees are all present at the same time in the same space. That is truly unusual. There can be a hundred musicians on stage together; one hundred highly talented, skillful, and individual players—experts—who are working together. This setting creates an enormous intensity that makes the job very challenging. Collective bodily presence of this scale can at its best transfer the energy to the audience as well, producing wonderful experiences.

The bodily and social entities are inseparable in practice even if they are distinguishable theoretically. Social relations are based on the mutuality of gaze and touch, speech and listening, resonance of feelings and emotions. This implies that my awareness of my body is profoundly a social thing, arising out of experience of the corporeality of other people and their gaze directed back to me.

Listening and negotiating as social processes are not possible without bodily presence. People taking part in this process, like musicians rehearsing a piece of music, researchers writing a scholarly article, or dancers rehearsing a choreography in an ensemble, all share their knowledge and experience with others. Nobody has the right and complete knowledge, only different pieces of information and skills. In the negotiating process these are discussed and shared with others in order to make a synthesis. In this process, listening is of crucial importance, the ability to receive instead of only sending out information. Openness and sensitivity to the moment are required in order to reach unity. The outcome of these negotiations is always unique, like an art performance or a lecture based on the same transparencies.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

Our motivation to better understand leadership of expert organizations has lead us to explore the nature of leadership knowledge. We have been educated by the explicit, formal knowledge formation of leadership with logo-linear thinking of social influence and hierarchical relationships between the leader and the follower. However, recent observations of professional work and expert organizations encouraged us to search for a different, more relational perspective to social processes of leadership. Also, we have been intrigued by learning more about the social nature of leadership in the field of arts and culture. We believe that these kinds of organizations might serve as a learning platform for leadership scholars from the perspective of aesthetic and bodily exposure to expert work.

In this chapter we have shown that aesthetics provide an alternative to the mainstream paradigm to study social processes such as leadership. We argued that aesthetics in leadership concerns the ways how leadership theory is understood and managerial practice is shaped. Artistic organizations like orchestras have typically been used as metaphorical examples to transmit new ideas to organization studies. We, however, think that they can be more than metaphors to increase our understanding of leadership.

We found two different aesthetic conceptualizations of leadership. The one we called the "beauty of geometry" and the other the "beauty of the living body." Based on our analysis, the beauty of geometry promotes the mainstream, traditional, hierarchy-based social influence between the leader and the follower where harmony is eventually targeted. Leadership is here understood mainly as a cognitive activity. While analyzing the limitations of the beauty of geometry in leading today's professional organizations, we developed the concept of the beauty of the living body. We were inspired by our observations and argumentation on the nature of social interaction needed in professional work. Emphasizing the living body as an active subject, we discussed the meaning of the bodily social presence and the body's potentials for knowledge and communication in leading expert organizations. Among other things, we found listening as a key bodily skill of leadership. This does not add to the leadership skills repertoire in various leadership role theories. Instead, we wish to suggest, that the social bodily perspective would further the discussion of leadership as a relational, social process (Dachler & Hosking, 1995) where everyday practice in the workplace is characterized by multiple voices, arguments, and negotiation. This view of leadership does not target ultimate harmony and stability but continuing innovation and improvement with its unforeseen social ramifications.

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CHAPTER 3

VIEWING THE DISPERSION OF LEADERSHIP THROUGH A POWER LENS

Exposing Unobtrusive Tensions and Problematic Processes

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ABSTRACT

A key argument in the chapter is that the current widespread adoption of shared or dispersed leadership strategies by organizations, while essential in regard to the nature of change in today's business environments, is problematic. A critical review of the leadership literature shows that it insufficiently covers the relationship between leadership and power, particularly at what is termed a deep structure level. A large public service organization with a history of using more customary or orthodox forms of leadership is used as the research subject. The research setting is a meeting held within one of the organization's divisional branches. An integrated method is employed that draws upon ethnography, grounded theory and discourse analysis. The data suggests that despite the implementation of structural changes that "should" result in the transfer of leadership skills and responsibilities to lower level workers, the discretionary power of these workers remains severely con-

strained; contrary to the organization's objective for dispersing its leadership, its deep structures continue in an unobtrusive fashion to centralize leadership power, control, and decision making. The chapter asserts that if managers wish to gain an accurate understanding of leadership and other processes of influence in their organizations they need delve deeper than much of the existing literature does; they need to move beyond the study of overt structures and episodic decision situations, and explore how power at a deep structure level unobtrusively affects the nature of influence in their organization.

INTRODUCTION

In response to the widespread adoption of flatter structures and the subsequent use of empowerment strategies by today's organizations, a new approach to organizational leadership has emerged. Bryman (1996) categorizes this approach as "dispersed leadership" and recognizes "superleadership" (Manz & Sims, 1991; Sims & Lorenzi, 1992), "self-leadership" (Kouzes & Posner, 1993; Manz & Sims, 1998), "real teams" (Katzenbach & Smith, 1993), and "process leadership" (Hosking, 1991; Knights & Willmott, 1992) as its founding theories.

One of the main arguments of this chapter, however, is that while dispersed leadership theory makes a valuable contribution to the leadership literature, it is problematic. A critical review of the leadership literature reveals a number of normative assumptions and deficiencies common to both the dispersed approach and the more traditional approaches to leadership. Central to these assumptions and deficiencies is an insufficient coverage of power and an overarching focus on how things "ought" to be rather than how they "actually" are.

With the study of "how things actually are" in mind, a research framework that places an emphasis on context is developed to empirically explore the relationship between leadership and power in a dispersed leadership scenario. This framework draws upon grounded theory (Strauss & Corbin, 1990), but is not strictly grounded. Rather, it uses concepts that reflect the tensions and paradoxes between the dispersed and traditional approaches to leadership as a priori triggers to guide the research process. The theory that emerges is thus grounded in these tensions and paradoxes.

This chapter discusses the data and concludes by arguing that the thematic constructs and concepts related to power, found to dominate the results, show that organizations with a history of practicing more orthodox forms of organization will have structures that are not readily seen; how these structures reinforce traditional patterns of influence goes largely unnoticed. In the situation researched here, these patterns of influence

unobtrusively undermine the organization's attempt to disperse its leadership. In consequence, despite surface-level structural changes that present an image of dispersed leadership and through this, an attempt to empower lower level workers, power remains centralized in the hands of traditionally dominant individuals and groups; leaving one to question whether dispersed leadership, despite representing an important shift in the theory of leadership, really offers anything new in practice.

CRITICAL REVIEW OF THE LEADERSHIP LITERATURE

Here, the interest is in exploring the relationship between leadership and power. Therefore, critically reviewing the leadership literature will involve looking for evidence of dualities in the theoretical approaches that make up this literature, along with an assessment of the extent to which concepts such as privilege, domination, and discipline are masked, yet nevertheless embedded within it.

The leadership literature contains a myriad of theories, which may be grouped into five broad categories: trait, style, contingency, new leadership, and now, dispersed leadership. Trait theories (Bingham, 1927; Bowden, 1927; Schenk, 1928) focused attention on determining the attributes and qualities of those extraordinary individuals who were recognized as being leaders. Style theorists (Blake & Mouton, 1964; Likert, 1961; McGregor, 1966; Sims, 1977) turned their attention away from innate traits to the behavior and style of prominent social and organizational leaders. Both these categories appeared to be in search of "the one best way to lead."

Contingency theorists (Evans, 1970; Fiedler, 1964; Hersey & Blanchard, 1969; Homans, 1959; Vroom & Yetton, 1973; Yukl, 1971, 1989) argued that there was no one best way, style, or behavior that could be attributed to "good" leadership. For them leadership was related to situational demands; that is, situational factors determined who was recognized as a leader. They explained "good" leadership in terms of how a leader adapted to the needs of a situation, or how to place a particular type of leader into a situation to which he or she was best suited.

The new leadership paradigm incorporated three main categories of theory: transactional leadership, transformational leadership, and culture-based leadership (Bryman, 1996). The transactional leadership theorists, including those theorists who explored the concept of leadership through the eyes of followers, saw leadership as being contingent on the condition of transaction or exchange between leaders and followers (Hollander, 1979). Transformational leadership, arguing that "good" leadership is achieved through more than just tangible inducements, sought to reen-

gage the charismatic leadership thesis. This approach suggests that leadership can be conceptually organized along a number of situational correlated dimensions: charismatic leadership, inspirational leadership, intellectual stimulation, and individual consideration (Bass & Stogdill, 1990). Culture-based theorists viewed leadership as being culturally specific, that is, "good" leadership depended on how a leader influenced his or her organization's culture.

While, each of the above-mentioned approaches (trait, style, contingency, and new leadership) may be thought of as rival camps in the leadership literature, common to each of them is an adherence to functionalist structures and orthodox control models of organization. From a more critical deconstructive perspective, within each of these approaches the leader–follower relationship is of central importance. This relationship takes on a dualistic orientation in which leaders occupy a position of privilege; they are considered to be, either through natural ability or the possession of appropriate attributes, superior to their followers—the argument being that if leaders were not superior, people would not follow them (Gordon, 2002).

The historical practice of leadership has reinforced this differential in power between leaders and followers to the point where it has become a taken-for-granted reality. Accordingly, mainstream management theorists have come to view the superiority of leaders as a "natural" thing and thus, for them, unproblematic (Clegg & Hardy, 1996b). Such a view has given rise to an assumption that appears to pervade the literature, an assumption that privileges leaders with a "voice" and a position of dominance, while at the same time, perhaps somewhat unwittingly, constraining the voice of followers (see, e.g., Enz, 1988; Gandz & Murray, 1980; Mintzberg, 1983). In consequence, within the literature, critical analysis of the relationship between leadership and power appears to have been considered unnecessary or, more to the point, overlooked. Because of common characteristics, the trait, style, contingency, and new leadership approaches are defined in this chapter as being traditional in orientation.

In contrast, dispersed leadership has emerged in response to the introduction of new organizational forms, which are characterized by flatter, more organically oriented structures. By positing the need for self-leadership, this approach appears to be calling for the de-differentiation of the leader–follower relationship. This de-differentiation is based on the sharing of power between "the leader" and "the follower"; from a theoretical perspective this sharing of power begins to blur the boundaries that have traditionally differentiated the leader from the follower. This being the case, in a practical sense, one would be left pondering over the question, Who is supposed to lead and who is supposed to follow?

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Since the sharing of power appears to be of central importance to the theory of dispersed leadership, one might expect the construct of power to be central to its development. However, a closer look at the literature reveals that this is not the case. Dispersed leadership theorists return to the apolitical approach adopted by the vast majority of leadership theorists. By way of example, Katzenbach and Smith (1993), in their work on real teams, appear to assume that the devolution of leadership's power and control to team leaders can occur unproblematicly in an organization. Such an assumption implies that an organization's management will willingly transfer power to team leaders and, when doing so, will have no overriding influence on the nature of this transference or its ongoing management. But, even if the intention of the organization's management is to share power, the work of Foucault (1970), Clegg (1989), and Haugaard (1997) demonstrates that the organization's historically constituted codes of order or, as they are termed in this chapter, deep structures, may prevent its management from doing so.

Deep structures are not easily seen, so, unlike surface structures their effect on what people say and do is unobtrusive (Deetz, 1985; Frost, 1987). People become aware and respond to deep structures by experiencing social interaction; they learn how they are supposed to behave in a particular social setting. Deep structures act as subtle codes of behavioral order (Foucault, 1970) that are unique to a particular social system (Haugaard, 1997) or discourse formation (Fairclough, 1989, 1995; Hardy, 1994; van-Dijk, 1997). In this chapter, the social system or discourse formation is an organization.

By way of explaining the effects of deep structures, consider the situation where a chief executive officer (CEO) of an organization communicates to his or her subordinates that his or her door is always open. But, because workers are aware of the power differential between themselves and their CEO, and that this power differential enables the CEO to either enrich or undermine their career, when, or more to point if, workers do enter the CEO's office, their behavior will most likely be constrained. In addition to personal interest, at the heart of this constraint are historically constituted codes of order that govern what is considered an appropriate form of behavior in such a setting; in this case, these codes would most likely compel workers to behave with deference. In any situation in which people are compelled to act with deference, even when acknowledging that the act may be a false representation, one would have to question the extent to which these people are actually empowered.

This example of how deep structures constrain the behavior of people in organizations also provides an alternative view of power to that predominately discussed in the mainstream management literature. The existence of deeper structures suggests that power is not necessarily something that

people do or do not possess, nor is necessarily tied to the control of resources (Clegg & Hardy, 1996b); rather, power, through the surreptitious existence of constraining structures and forms, is embedded in a person's awareness of how he or she is supposed to behave in a particular social setting; power is embedded in people's knowledge and thus surrounds and pervades them (Foucault, 1980).

In consequence, even if an organization's management attempts to transfer leadership skills and responsibilities to lower level workers, because of the constraining nature of power at a deep structure level of the organization, these workers could consider such an attempt to be infelicitous with respect to the codes of behavioral order embedded in the organization's deep structure. This being the case, the organization's management runs the risk of marginalizing itself in the eyes of its workers. In short, they could lose much of their power.

In summary, Figure 3.1 outlines the current relative position of the leadership and power literatures. The figure shows, as already mentioned, that the vast majority of the leadership literature does not critically discuss power. A small number of theorists, for example, Pfeffer (1981) and Smircich (1983), do offer some critical insights to the relationship between leadership and power, however, they do so with respect to the exercise of power at a "surface structure level," that is, where people are seen to either have or not have power. To date, the leadership literature has not

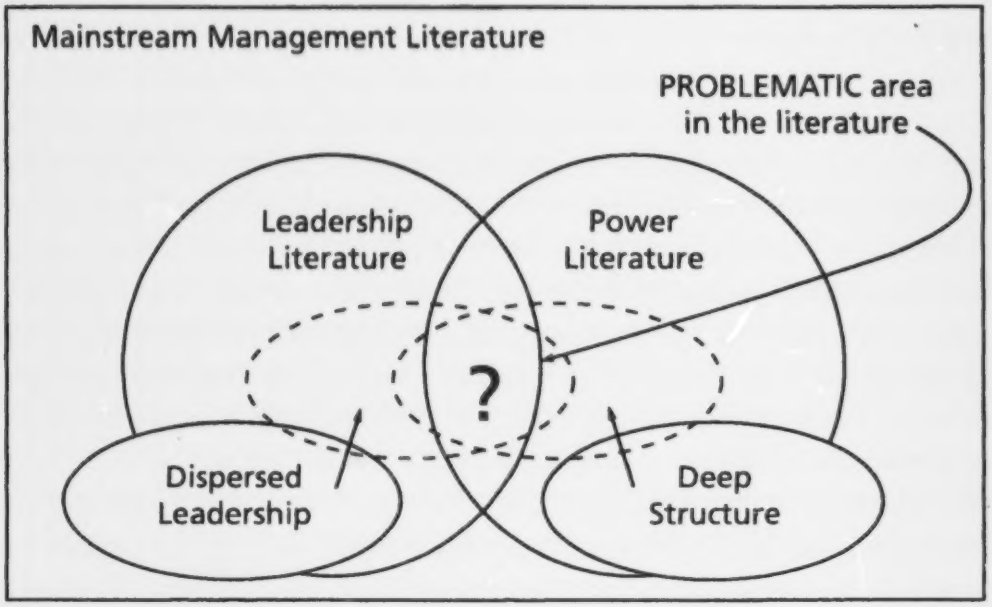

Figure 3.1 Relationships between leadership and power literatures. Note the dotted ovals represent the desired position of dispersed leadership and deep structure power literatures. (Adapted from Gordon, 2002.)

addressed the relationship between leadership and power at a "deep structure" level. In consequence, as per Figure 3.1, dispersed leadership does not account for, if, and how power, particularly at a deep structure level, affects the nature of leadership in dispersed leadership scenarios.

DEVLOPING THE RESEARCH FRAMEWORK

Tension and Paradox in New Forms of Organizing

In a recent study, Palmer and Dunford (1997) surveyed more than 300 Australian organizations in an attempt to verify the extent to which these organizations were actually using new organizational forms. They found that 87% of organizations were using new organizational forms in one way or another, but 83% of these still used the traditional functionalist form as their structure. In short, what they found was that organizations were maintaining the traditional hierarchically and functionally divided structures, while at the same time introducing changes that were based on empowerment.

When viewed through a power lens, that is, a lens that embodies the nature of power and influence, Palmer and Dunford's findings reveal a paradox. By way of explanation, traditional organizational principles promote the use of hierarchically defined power relationships, which are underpinned by Weber's (1978) rational legal concept of power, that is, authority. People sanctioned with authority carry a "right to power" while those who are not sanctioned with authority have a "duty to obey." In contrast, new organizational forms, particularly those that place an emphasis on empowerment, promote the sharing of power to create a more egalitarian decision-making environment. With the nature of these alternative approaches to power in mind, Palmer and Dunford's (1997) study shows that 83% of organizations are attempting to empower their workers while maintaining a framework historically constituted on a principle of domination. Here domination is not necessarily that which is associated with oppression, but that which is associated with behavioral codes of order that unobtrusively reinforce a duty to obey on behalf of those organization members not sanctioned with authority (Clegg, 1975, 1990). The problematic nature of the paradoxical relationship between the concepts "domination" and "empowerment" might be further appreciated if one considers the question, What happens to a person's duty to obey when they are empowered?

Generating A Priori Concepts

Reflection on the critical review of the leadership literature reveals evidence of the paradox between empowerment and domination. Underpinning traditional leadership theory are the concepts of *differentiation* (clear boundaries of identity between leaders and followers) and *domination* (natural superiority of leaders). In contrast, underlying dispersed leadership theory are the concepts of *de-differentiation* (self-leadership blurs the boundary of identity between leaders and followers) and *collaboration* (the sharing of power and control).

Eisenhardt and Bourgeois (1989) suggest that concepts used as a priori guides can help focus the research process and prevent the researcher from becoming lost in a myriad of data. Accordingly, this study uses the concepts of *differentiation*, *de-differentiation*, *domination*, and *collaboration* to guide the data collection and analysis phases of the research. If dispersed leadership is implemented in an organization, and if the setting's surface structures and deep structures are not in tension, then one would expect to find evidence of traditional power relationships being de-differentiated, resulting in collaborative social processes. One would not expect to find evidence of people in dispersed leadership positions being dominated.

The Research Framework

Using a priori concepts that represent tensions and paradoxes between the dispersed and traditional approaches to leadership has a number of benefits. First, by targeting theoretical tensions and paradoxes the researcher's attention is focused on areas in the research setting that have a high likelihood of being problematic. Second, because the a priori tensions and paradoxes are generated from the literature, they reflect existing theory; thus, using concepts that represent these tensions and paradoxes as research triggers or guides narrows the gap between theory and practice. The importance of this latter point becomes apparent when you consider that, unlike the paradigm wars of recent times, the framework spans the inductive and deductive paradigms; this being evident in the use of a priori concepts that are generated from extant theory to guide an inductive theory-building process (see Figure 3.2).

Interestingly, theorists such as Clegg and Hardy (1996a) argue that it is now time to acknowledge the existence of, and move forward with, a plurality of representational viewpoints. Similarly, Calas and Smircich (1999), Langley (1999), and Weick (1999) argue that it is time to move beyond the inductive/deductive, positivist/antipositive, modern/postmodern debates of recent times and dismantle our paradigmatic boundaries, thereby

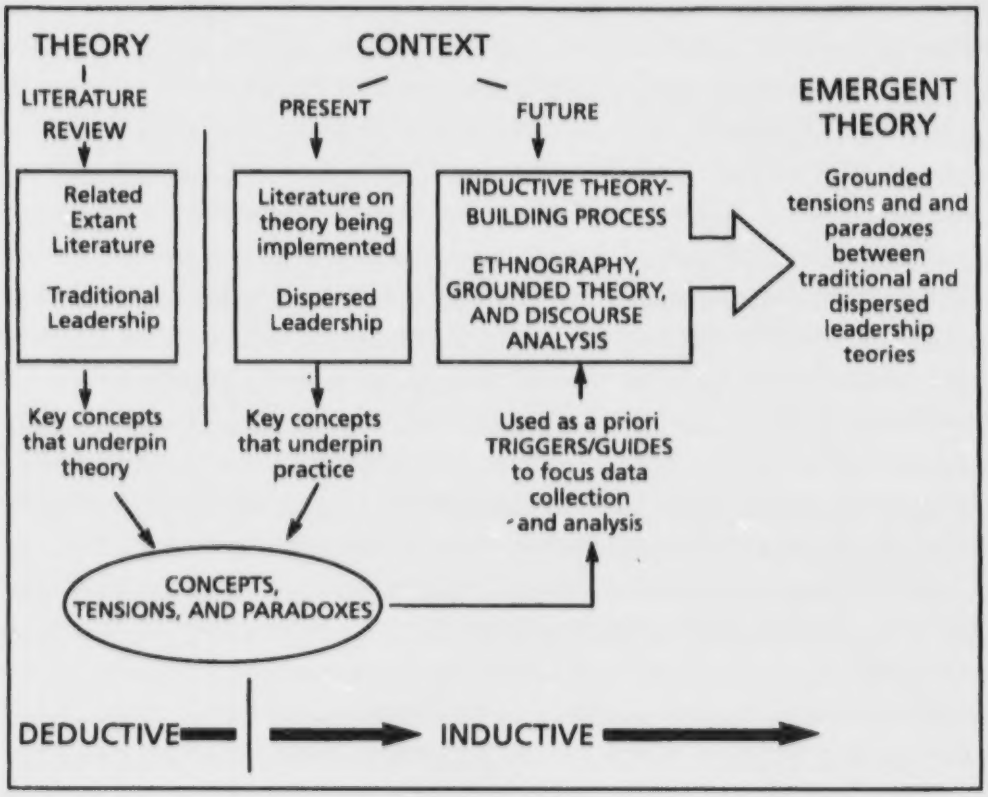

Figure 3.2 Research framework.

enriching the sense we make of our environments by acknowledging and utilizing multiple perspectives and viewpoints. These points will not be discussed further here. Suffice to say that in the global, not to mention the fast-changing, discursively oriented business environments of today such suggestions seem to make sense.

THE METHODOLOGY

As Clegg (1975) and Van Maanen (1996) aptly point out, an ethnographic approach requires the researcher to gain an intimate understanding of the informal "ways of doing things" in a research setting, allowing him or her to see and experience deeper forms and structures that unobtrusively constrain people's behavior in the setting. With respect to the principles of ethnography, this study is part of a larger research project that began 1 year prior. The researcher had spent the previous year positioning himself so as to gain acceptance from the organization's people and to experience firsthand everyday life in the organization. This was achieved by spending a

number of days each week working with the organization's personnel; observing their everyday activities, attending formal meetings, conducting formal interviews, and informally talking with managers and workers.

As mentioned earlier, while the method draws upon grounded theory it does not strictly adhere to grounded theory principles. Rather than allowing patterns to emerge from the data with no a priori theory in mind, this study uses a priori concepts (Eisenhardt & Bourgeois, 1989) generated from theory to guide the data collection and analysis phases of the study. Like grounded theory, theoretical sampling is used, but the emergent theory is grounded in the tensions and paradoxes that the a priori concepts represent.

By way of explanation, the a priori concepts for this study reflect tensions between the theoretical principles of traditional or orthodox forms of leadership (differentiation and domination) and dispersed leadership (de-differentiation and collaboration). The setting's spatial arrangement along with the things that people said and did within the setting were analyzed to see if and how they reflect each of the concepts. For example, with respect to the concept of "differentiation," the things that people said and did were analyzed to see how they describe the nature of differential relationships between individuals and groups within the setting; that is, how people saw themselves as being different to others with respect to power.

Discourse analysis is used to show how people's perception of their power relationships is embedded in what they say and do. In particular, the work of Fairclough (1989, 1995), Boje (1995), and van-Dijk (1997) is drawn upon to see if and how the organization's historical discourse patterns are present in the things that people say and do, and to what extent these patterns privilege some and marginalize others. Moreover, these discourse patterns are analyzed to see if they reinforce or undermine the organization's objectives with respect to dispersing its leadership.

The Research Setting

The subject of this study is a large government service organization that, because of the recent government inquiry, has embarked on a number of change management initiatives. One of the strategies employed is the dispersion of leadership throughout selected divisions. This has involved flattening the organization's structure, introducing teams, and empowering many workers by promoting them to team leader positions. One of the key findings of the government inquiry was that the organization's use of the traditional command and control model of organizing centralized power into the hands of certain entities, allowing these entities to dominate and force lower level officers into patterns of obedience, which prevented these officers from thinking and acting strategically. The inquiry recommended

that the organization empower lower level workers to create a more egalitarian proactive work environment.

The research setting is an operations review meeting conducted by one of the organization's divisional branches. A division such as this covers a geographical area the size of several city suburbs or a country regional area. The entire organization is made up of approximately 80 of these geographical divisions. Since implementing the dispersed leadership strategy, the division being studied had achieved an extraordinary improvement in performance statistics despite being understaffed for a substantial period (six months). These results were of key interest to the organization's senior executive and the researcher.

Research Question

How does the relationship between deep structure and power affect the practice of leadership in a dispersed leadership scenario?

Data Collection and Analysis

Data was collected through observation of the meeting's proceedings; raw data was recorded directly into field notes. The text examples from the field notes were analyzed and grouped with respect to thematic and profile codes. The profile codes represent who said or did what and when. The thematic codes are the a priori concepts that reflect the tensions and paradoxes between the dispersed and extant leadership literatures.

By way of explaining the coding process, each portion of text was analyzed to see whether its theme reflected one of the a priori concepts. If not, the text was discarded. If so, that piece of text was given the respective concept that it represented as its code name. The data was then disassembled and reassembled into groups that represented each of the a priori codes. Frequency comparisons and cross-tabulation between the thematic and profile codes were conducted to further systematize and validate the interpretation of the data.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

On the surface, the reduction in the organization's levels of hierarchy, introduction of teams, and attempt to empower lower level workers looks as though it had resulted in the dispersion of power throughout the organization. Within the meeting, participants conducted themselves in a

friendly and what appeared to be an open manner; any tension was quickly alleviated by the use of humor. There appeared to be a genuine positive feeling about the changes that had been introduced; however, as is about to be seen, analysis of the data suggests that at a "deeper" level something else was happening.

Here, spatial arrangement, statements, and actions made in the meeting are reported in their order of occurrence. As mentioned earlier, these arrangements, statements, and actions were then analyzed to see whether they reflected a particular a priori concept (see Table 1). While the results indicate that a large number of events occurred in the meeting, only a few will be discussed here. For example, the spatial arrangements within the scene (see Figure 3.3) display a physical differentiation of the meeting's participants based upon positional status.

At the front of the room were the division's senior management. Facing these senior managers were two groups of specialist investigators (high status position in the organization) and directly behind the investigators were two teams of general (nonspecialist) workers. By occupying a position at the back of the room, the teams are symbolically marginalized with respect to the other participants, their behavior with respect to turn taking (Fairclough, 1989), and acts of deference throughout the meeting reflected the nature of this marginalization. A post-meeting debriefing with the division's commander revealed that he did not notice the seating arrange-

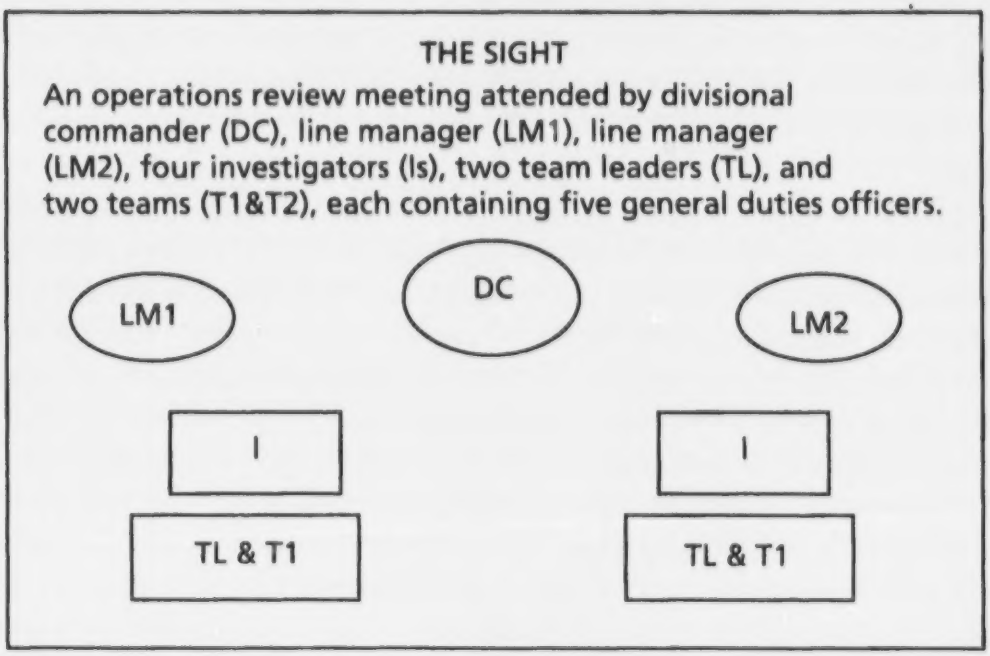
THE SIGHT
An operations review meeting attended by divisional commander (DC), line manager (LM1), line manager (LM2), four investigators (Is), two team leaders (TL), and two teams (T1&T2), each containing five general duties officers.
LM1
DC
LM2
I
I
TL & T1
TL & T1

Figure 3.3 The Sight.

ment; the seating was not prearranged nor was it related to any formal protocols, rather, it occurred unintentionally. This chapter asserts, that the layout went unnoticed because the symbolic display of rank and specialists' status within the organization is part of the "natural order of things." When privilege through rank and specialization becomes a taken-for-granted reality, it represents a form of deep structure that has an unobtrusive, yet constraining, influence on people's behavior.

A more deliberate, yet still latent, form of differentiation occurred when an investigator participating in the meeting referred to the team leaders (both of them) as "they," despite the fact that he knew the leaders by their names and that they were sitting directly behind him (see Table 1). Furthermore, when doing this he used actions and a tone that portrayed the team leaders as units of production that were "supposed" to be at his disposal. Through the setting's spatial arrangements and by using phrases that dehumanize the identities of the team leaders within the context of the meeting, he uses a differentiation strategy that privileges the investigators (us) with a superior position over the team leaders (them).

Adding weight to the validity of the above observation, another investigator demanded that team members fill out forms in a certain way "or I'll throw them back in your face." In doing so, he subtly demonstrates that he perceives himself as having the right to issue threats; this does not only communicate that he considers himself superior to the team members, but also that he has the right to discipline (dominate and threaten) them. Yet he was not sanctioned with such a right.

Each of these actions indicates that despite the surface level changes to the organization's structure, including the introduction of titles and procedures that are supposed to empower team leaders, at a deep structure level there is evidence to suggest that power has remained in the hands of the normally dominant individuals and groups. In this meeting, the investigators seem to remain in a dominant position. This is not only evident in what the investigators said and did but also in the frequency of which they display examples of differentiation and domination as opposed to de-differentiation and collaboration (see Table 1).

At this point, it is important to consider how power at a deep structure level affects the behavior of dispersed leaders. Prior to this meeting, members from both teams had voiced their dissatisfaction with a senior investigator's handling of the division's job roster (work schedule). When one of the team leaders questioned how the investigator had been handling the job roster, the investigator responded in an aggressive tone, stating, "I've already had a one to one with the person who complained; the rest of you, if you're keen enough you need to come and get it." The investigator's tone suggested that he was not pleased with having his methods questioned. Interestingly, several team members then went into consecutive

displays of what appeared to be "damage control." These members took turns in telling the division's commander that they supported the investigator's methods, which was in stark contrast to what they had said before the meeting.

It appears that these team members interpreted that it was in their best interests to appease the investigator. This being the case, one can deduce that the investigator, despite his unsanctioned status, was perceived as having the power to either hurt or enrich the team members' working lives and is therefore exercising an unobtrusive form of dominancy. In consequence, despite their surface level empowerment (new title), it is clear that the willingness of the teams' leaders and members to move outside the boundaries that reflect historically constituted forms of deep structure (in this case, the high-status position of investigators) is severely constrained.

Table 1. Summary of Data Collection, Coding, and Analysis

Coding of Events			
Event	*Who*	*Description*	*Code*
Opening	Senior manager and line managers	Only the senior executives spoke, lower level participants only spoke after being invited to do so	Differentiation
Giving praise	Senior manager	Commander praised the teams for their performance statistics; in doing so, he demonstrated his reward power	Differentiation
Humor	Investigator	The most vocal investigator made a joke, the butt of which were the women members of the teams	Differentiation
Challenge	Team leader	Team leader challenged one of the investigators in regard to the way he had been handling the job roster	De-differentiation and collaboration
Dehumanization	Investigator	Investigator uses actions and tone that portrays team members as units of production who "should" be at his disposal	Differentiation and domination
Threat	Investigator	Investigator threatened team leader and team members	Differentiation and domination
Saving face	Team members	Several team members went into what appeared to be damage control, stating, contrary to statements made before the meeting, that they supported the investigator's handling of the job roster	Domination

Table 1. Summary of Data Collection, Coding, and Analysis (Cont.)

Coding of Events			
Event	*Who*	*Description*	*Code*
Empowerment	Senior manager	Senior manager stated that the teams were empowered and that it was up to them to take their voice	De-differentiation and collaboration
Consensus	Team members	Team members give their support to the change that had occurred	Collaboration
Legitimacy	Investigator	Investigator made a threat and rationalized his right to make such a threat on "rational" management principle	Domination
Signifying act	Investigator	Investigator attempted to gain further legitimacy for superior power by referring to a practical example in which his expertise gave him legitimacy	Differentiation and domination
Closing	Senior manager	Senior manager closed the meeting with a statement that represents a paradox on intention. In attempting to emphasize the importance of the teams taking their voice, his timing and tone communicates a message imbued with command and an expectation of obedience	Differentiation and de-differentiation

CONCLUSION

This study exposes important issues for managers in regard to the widespread adoption of new forms of organizing and how these forms affect the nature of leadership in today's organizations. A critical review process showed that the leadership literature in general, and dispersed leadership in particular, insufficiently covers power and is subsequently problematic. When viewed through a power lens the concepts that underpin the more traditional approaches to leadership (*differentiation* and *domination*) are shown to be in tension with those that underpin dispersed leadership (*de-differentiation* and *collaboration*). This chapter asserts that it is essential for managers to be aware of such theoretical tensions, because they highlight where problems are likely to occur in practice.

Despite the introduction of a dispersed leadership strategy by the organization being researched, the data shows that at a deep structure level the concepts that underpin traditional leadership continue to govern the setting's discourse. Actors, who would have normally held positions of superiority, in this case, senior management and specialist investigators, unobtrusively and to a certain extent unwittingly, continue to use strategies of differentiation that privileged them with a position of dominance in the setting. Interestingly, this largely goes unnoticed in this setting because the actions of the senior managers and the investigators are supported by the organization's deep structure, which continues to reflect the natural order of things as it used to be (Deetz, 1985). In other words, despite what appears to be a genuine desire to empower lower level workers, the participants in this setting seem to be unaware of how their understanding of the "natural order of things" or, their knowledge of how things "ought" to be, severely constrains the extent to which this empowerment can happen.

Hopefully this study will cause managers and leaders in today's fast changing business environments to think about how things are before they think about how they "ought" to be. In addition, it is hoped that managers gain an appreciation for how power at a deep structure level in an organization can unobtrusively influence social processes, such as those experienced in leadership scenarios. It is hoped that the method presented in this study provides insights into how managers can bring their organization's deep structures to the surface. If managers and leaders cannot "see" their organization's deep structures, they cannot design strategies to deal with their effects.

This chapter has a much more specific message for researchers and practitioners of leadership. Clearly, with respect to the shifting limits to power in organizations today, the field of leadership needs to address the relationship between leadership and power, particularly at a deep structure level. Without further research into this relationship managers cannot be certain that the adoption of dispersed leadership strategies will result, as espoused by dispersed leadership theory, in an alternative form of leadership that is suited to the fast-changing nature of today's business environments; on the contrary, the results of this research suggest that the strategy may simply be more of the same cloaked in a veil of false empowerment.

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CHAPTER 4

INFLUENCE, INSTITUTIONAL THEORY, AND LANGUAGE

An Analysis of Popular Management Discourse on Downsizing[1]

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ABSTRACT

Influence has institutional as well as interpersonal dimensions. At the core of institutional theory is the concept of institutional isomorphism, which focuses on the influence of rules, norms, and beliefs on organizational practices. However, despite the elaboration of institutional theory, significant gaps remain due to the limited attention that has been paid to the micro-level processes whereby institutional isomorphism occurs. A growing literature has identified the popular management literature as a conduit for ideas and information that help shape organizational practices. The research reported in this chapter focuses on the language used in the popular management literature on downsizing, with specific attention to the notion of "naturalizing analogies." Major analogies are identified and their implication discussed.

INFLUENCE AND INSTITUTIONAL THEORY

Influence has institutional as well as interpersonal dimensions. At the core of institutional theory is the concept of "institutional isomorphism" as an explanation for the "sameness of form" that characterizes organizations operating within a shared environment. Institutional isomorphism focuses on the role of rules, norms, and beliefs within a given population, in contrast to "competitive isomorphism," which focuses on the influence of competitive markets and on the importance of "fitting in" with niche requirements.

Institutional isomorphism takes three forms: normative, mimetic, and coercive (DiMaggio & Powell, 1991). Normative isomorphism occurs where professional education and training produces individuals of a similar orientation and disposition, which in turn leads to a commonality of approach across organizations as these individuals migrate between organizations. Mimetic isomorphism occurs when, as a response to uncertainty, organizations model themselves on organizations that they perceive to be more legitimate or successful. For example, Haveman (1993), in a study of savings-and-loan associations, found that diversification behavior involved the imitation of the behavior of the most profitable organizations. Similarly, Greve (1995) illustrates the applicability of mimetic isomorphism to the abandonment of strategies. This modeling acts as a means of enhancing the perceived legitimacy of the action of the mimicking organization.

Coercive isomorphism results both from formal pressures such as legislation and from informal pressures to conform to current views as to what management practices are "thought to be variously, more modern, appropriate or rational" (Scott, 1991, p. 178). In a similar vein, Abrahamson (1996, p. 255) argues that "fashionable management techniques must appear both rational (efficient means to important ends) and progressive (new as well as improved relative to older management techniques). The subtext is that such structures or techniques are what the "responsible" manager should be implementing. Hilmer and Donaldson (1996), in their critique of the role of fads in management thought, argue that a manager who is influenced by the latest prescription from a best-selling book is unlikely to be criticized, while those who ignore the latest trend risk being judged old-fashioned and unprofessional. Initially, the informal pressure may involve explicit advocacy of a certain practice. Over time the systematization of the influence—the institutionalization of the practice—is likely to be characterized by it attaining a status as "taken-for granted" knowledge within the appropriate community.

However, despite the elaboration of institutional theory, significant gaps remain due to the limited attention that has been paid to the micro-level processes whereby institutionalization occurs (Dacin, 1997; Lamertz &

Baum, 1998; Tolbert & Zucker, 1996). One contribution to developing this area has been provided by Tolbert and Zucker (1996), who argue that the process of institutionalization involves three sequential stages: habitualization (isolated, independent responses by various organizations to changing conditions), objectification (development of consensus as to appropriate responses, but commitment remains contingent in the absence of evidence of efficacy), and sedimentation (complete spread, sustained use). Another approach has been provided by McKinley, Zhao and Rust (2000, p. 232), who make a link with the managerial cognition literature (see also Walsh, 1995). In particular, McKinley and colleagues cite "a fundamental assumption that spans the diverse literature on management cognition that managers, like other actors, impose schemas on external information domains that require interpretation" (p. 232). Following Garud and Rappa (1994) and Neisser (1976), McKinley and colleagues (2000) define a schema as "an organization of experience that serves as an initial frame of reference for action and perception" (p. 232).

This "experience" can comprise multiple sources. As Watson and Bargiela-Chiappini (1998, p. 285) note, managers are "not alone and unassisted when they attempt to come to terms with their anxieties, make sense of their situation and decide how to act [with] the culture in which they are located provid[ing] numerous cues and guidelines."

The Popular Management Literature and the Role of Language

A growing literature has identified the popular management literature as one such source of "clues," that is, as a conduit for ideas and information that help shape organizational practices (Chen & Meindl, 1991; Deephouse, 1996; Hybels, Ryan, & Barney, 1995; Lamertz & Baum, 1998; Mazza & Alvarez, 2000; Watson & Bargiela-Chiappini, 1998). The research reported in this chapter focuses specifically on the language used in this literature.

Language is important because "the way people talk about the world has everything to do with the way the world is ultimately understood and acted in" (Eccles & Nohria, 1992, p. 29). In regard to managing, Pfeffer (1994, p. 112) argues that "managerial language is critical [and] both reflects and determines how people think about the managing process." For Abrahamson (1996), language is central to the process whereby the rationale for a new practice is established, while Fligstein (1991, p. 335) argues that if actors are to precipitate institutional change, they must "create an organizational 'story'" that presents the proposed change as an appropriate solu-

tion to identified problems. Similarly, Watson and Bargiela-Chiappini (1998) argue that we encounter a variety of narratives

> which constitute a way of talking about or writing about a particular issue, thus framing the way people understand and act with respect to that issue [and that there] is a forceful potential in the narrative for what we might call the 'shaping' of the receiver's subjectivity and stance towards issues. (pp. 287–288)

For others (see, e.g., Grant & Oswick, 1996), their concern with the importance of language in managing is tied to the use of metaphors and analogy. According to Douglas (1986), as the entrenching of a practice is as much an intellectual process as it is an economic or political one, "naturalizing analogies" play a particularly significant role because they link something new and potentially threatening to something familiar. She argues that for the process of institutionalization to progress, the advocated practice needs to be seen to have a "rightness" that is "founded in nature and therefore in reason" (p. 52). In a similar vein, Suchman (1995, p. 585) refers to the importance of "naturalizing cognitive reifications" in the determination of cognitive legitimacy, a status that is bestowed on the basis of actions being seen as necessary or inevitable. Davis, Diekmann, and Tinsley (1994) refer to the "long history" of the body as the main naturalizing analogy used to legitimate organizational arrangements, but they also argue that it is now being replaced in this role by that of the network.

This chapter provides an analysis of analogy use in the popular management literature as it applies to one specific organizational practice: downsizing. The reason for the choice of this practice and the associated research methods are discussed in the following section.

METHOD

An investigation of analogy use would be more meaningful if the practice at the focus of the study had certain characteristics. First, it should have been both widely applied and sustained over a significant period so that there is a strong case that it can be treated as a practice that is, at least, "semi-institutionalized" (Tolbert & Zucker, 1996). Second, in order for a link to be made to institutional isomorphism, it should be a practice where a competitive isomorphism-based explanation is difficult to sustain. The latter is most likely to be the case where there is a lack of consistent evidence that links the practice to enhanced performance (Budros, 1997).

The Focus on Downsizing

On the basis of the above criteria, the practice of downsizing was chosen. "Downsizing" is defined as an organization's conscious use of permanent employment cuts in an attempt to enhance its efficiency and/or effectiveness (Budros, 1999). In regard to the issues of pervasiveness and longevity, it was a widespread practice during the 1980s and 1990s. Almost 60% of the companies with greater than 250 employees that are listed in Standard and Poor's COMPUSTAT CD-ROM database downsized by 5% or more in the period 1980 to 1994 (Cascio & Young, 1996a). Downsizing was used both in situations of decline and growth (Freeman & Cameron, 1993). It moved beyond being a cost-driven response of debt-burdened corporations to being a practice seen as an appropriate preemptive action where there was the anticipation of continuing, intensely competitive markets (Budros, 1997; Cascio, 1993; Hoskisson & Hitt, 1994). Consistent with this, some of the largest downsizings occurred during periods of economic growth. During one such period, 1993–1994, the incidence of downsizing among large, high profitability firms almost doubled (Cascio & Young, 1996a).

In regard to corporate performance, there is evidence that key financial indicators often do not improve as a result of downsizing (Cameron, Freeman, & Mishra, 1993). Lee (1997), using stock return data from the Center for Research in Securities Prices of the University of Chicago, studied stock price changes for 300 unique layoff announcements for firms listed on the New York Stock Exchange, American Stock Exchange, and NASDAQ. Lee found these layoff announcements to be associated with "significantly negative returns" (p. 892) whether or not the downsizing be primarily cost-cutting or primarily part of a strategic rethink (although the returns were more negative in the former case). Similarly, Cascio and Young (1996b, p. 4) analyzed the performance of 2,526 companies listed on the New York and NASDAQ Stock Exchanges and concluded that "as a management strategy to improve profitability, productivity and stock price,...the unique effect of downsizing on these performance measures is very weak." This finding was confirmed in a follow-up study (Cascio, Young, & Morris, 1997), which analyzed the performance of all companies listed in Standard and Poor's 500 over the 12-year period 1981 to 1992. Their conclusion: "Our research ... has not produced evidence that downsizing firms were generally and significantly able to improve profits" (p. 1187). While competitive conditions are clearly constitutive of the concern with restructuring, the evidence on performance effects of downsizing suggests that "the economic rationality of downsizing is limited" (Budros, 1997, p. 245) and that, therefore, its pervasiveness must rest on something other than performance-based evidence that it is a competitive

necessity (McKinley, Mone, & Barker 1998; McKinley, Sanchez, & Shick, 1995; McKinley, Zhao, & Rust, 2000).

Sample

The research began with a pilot study (Dunford & Palmer, 1996). A database was produced through an electronic literature search for articles on downsizing that were published between 1991 and 1994 in the popular management literature. The popular management literature was defined for these purposes as material primarily designed to be read by management practitioners. Thus it included journals such as *Fortune, Business Week,* and *Harvard Business Review,* and excluded those such as *Academy of Management Journal, Academy of Management Review,* and *Administrative Science Quarterly.* This preliminary search produced 74 articles.

Each of these articles was subject to content analysis that focused on the analogies that were used to describe downsizing. Individual metaphors were identified, listed, and then labeled in two ways. The first labeling involved identifying the specific aspect of downsizing that the metaphor addressed. Four aspects were used for this purpose: the external conditions (within which organizations are operating/will operate), the internal condition of predownsized organizations, the process whereby downsizing occurs and the negative effects of downsizing. The reason for this disaggregation was to enable us to see not just whether the discourse utilized definable analogies, but also whether any such analogies were broadly applied across the discourse or, alternatively, specific to particular aspects. The second labeling involved categorizing metaphors by core root analogy. The analogy categories were not established a priori; they emerged from the analysis of metaphors. Categorization was undertaken by two coders for whom an interrater reliability of 0.95 was established.[2] Where differences existed between coders, the points of disagreement were discussed and resolved prior to the final allocation to categories.

The second stage of the study involved extending the database through a more extensive electronic literature search using ABI Inform to identify popular management articles on downsizing published inclusively between 1987 and 1994. This produced 258 articles. Of these, six proved not to be on downsizing, reducing the sample to 252. The pervasiveness of metaphorical language was revealed when subsequent analysis revealed that only 4 of the 252 failed to use metaphors in the context of the discussion of downsizing. The following analysis is based on the resultant 248 articles from 123 different journals. Figure 4.1 provides the year-by-year distribution.

Figure 4.1. Number of Articles vs Time.

The 248 articles produced 1,678 instances of metaphor use although this is a conservative figure in that any given metaphor was only counted once in each article in which it appeared. This 1,678 comprised 578 different metaphors. Categorization of metaphors followed the format established in the pilot study (Dunford & Palmer, 1996), that is, it was based on the aspect of downsizing with which the metaphor dealt. As a result of the pilot study, a fifth category was added to the four used in the pilot study. The additional category referred to the description of the internal organizational characteristics cited as necessary if organizations were to cope with the external environment. For this major study, each article was also classified according to whether its central tone was prodownsizing, antidownsizing or neutral. Categorization was undertaken by two coders for whom an interrater reliability of 0.89 was established[3] (see Footnote 1).

The resulting data were then organized to show the patterns of analogy use over time. The longitudinal element was important because to substantiate the standing of an analogy as a significant element, it should have some sustainability across time. The data were then analyzed using the sign test (based on binomial tables) to test the ranking of categories of data

over time and regression analysis to test the changes in absolute levels of categories of data over time.[4]

RESULTS

Core Analogies in the Literature

External Conditions

The metaphors describing the external conditions within which organizations operate comprise only 3% of the metaphors. They center on themes that present a picture of a hostile, turbulent environment (see Table 4.1). Two root analogies predominate. The first presents external conditions in terms of meteorological images; organizations face "storms" and "waves of change." The second has military/violence images; competition is "cut-throat," "bare knuckle," and "ferocious," and organizations are "under siege." Other metaphors inform us that "vultures and sharks" await us and that "the wolf is at the door."

Table 1. Metaphors for External Conditions

Metaphor (43)[5]	*Inference*
Meteorological (14)	
Facing stormy seas	
Economic storms	
Rough economic weather	
	The environment is threatening.
Military/violence (10)	
Cut-throat competition	
Bare knuckle competition	
Under siege	
Onslaught of competition	
Miscellaneous (19)	

Necessary Internal Characteristics

The second category of metaphors, covering 11% of the metaphors, deals with the internal characteristics that organizations need to have to be able to cope with the hostile, turbulent environment portrayed above. The popular management literature is unequivocal. One root analogy encapsulates 85% of the metaphors on this topic. The organization is seen as akin to a human body with the emphasis being on the need to be "lean," "slim," "agile," and "healthy" (see Table 4.2). The inference is that it is the organi-

zational equivalents of such characteristics that are needed by organizations if they are to thrive in a threatening environment.

Table 2. Metaphors for Necessary Internal Conditions

Metaphor (177)	Inference
Body (151)	
Lean	
Slim	
Trim	Organizations are akin to bodies. They need to be in "good shape" if they are to cope with a threatening environment.
Flab-free	
Nimble	
Agile	
Fast and footloose	
Healthy	
Clean bill of health	
Miscellaneous (26)	

Current Internal Characteristics

The third category of metaphors deals with the current characteristics of predownsized organizations. These comprise 9% of the metaphors. The organization as a body remains the overwhelmingly dominant analogy, representing 80% of the metaphors that describe the internal condition of organizations. This root analogy is represented by a wide range of metaphors that liken the organization to a human body that is either overweight or unwell (the former exceeds the latter in a ratio of 2:1). Organizations are commonly described as "fat," "bloated," and "flabby" or as "hemorrhaging," "ill," and "diseased." The message conveyed by this imagery is clear; although organizations must respond to a hostile environment, they are in "poor shape" to take such action (see Table 4.3). A subtheme within this argument is that should an organization be in "good shape," downsizing is still advocated on the grounds that "healthy" organizations can benefit from proactive intervention in expectation of an increasingly competitive environment.

Table 3. Metaphors for the Internal Condition of Predownsized Organizations

Metaphor (154)	*Inference*
Body/Medical (119)	
Fat	
Bloated	
Overweight	The current state of many organizations can be seen as akin to an overweight person. As such, they are inflexible, slow, and uncompetitive.
Flabby	
Bulge	
Corpulent	
Overfed	
Slothful	
Sluggish	
Lumbering	
Diseased	Many organizations are in a poor state akin to a sick person, and requiring attention if they are to perform at the necessary level.
Sick	
Ill	
Ailing	
Hemorrhaging	
Arthritic	
Clogged-up corporate arteries	
Miscellaneous (35)	

The Process of Downsizing

The fourth category of metaphors refers to the process of downsizing. This is the dominant focus of the metaphors, accounting for more (55%) than all the other categories combined. The dominant analogy involves militaristic/violent imagery, this accounting for one-half of the metaphors. The language here is of "cutting heads," "axing people," "thinning the ranks," "biting the bullet," and "using a machete to slash employee head count." Downsizing is represented as being a response requiring the bold, dispassionate direct action akin to a military intervention. The body/medical analogy remains a core analogy, through references to "using the surgeon's scalpel," "trimming the fat," and "dieting." One other analogy is widely applied, that of downsizing as akin to horticultural activity; managers are exhorted to "prune," "slash and burn," and "get rid of the deadwood" (see Table 4.4).

Table 4. Metaphors for How Organizations Downsize

Metaphor (917)	*Inference*
Military/Violence (478)	
Slaughtering	The process of downsizing requires firm and decisive action to reduce staff numbers. The process requires the tough, dispassionate focus of a military engagement.
Declare war	
Massacre	
Go for the throat	
Firing squad	
Lopping heads	
Frontal assault	
Execution	
Hit list	
Biting the bullet	
Thinning the ranks	
The firing line	
Heads roll	
Slashing employee headcount	
Body/Medical (134)	
Having radical surgery	The process of downsizing is akin to surgery or dieting in the case of sick or overweight people.
Paring to the bone	
Trimming the fat	
Using surgeon's scalpel	
Unclogging blocked arteries	
Crash diet	
Vaccinating	Downsizing can be undertaken by well-performing organizations in the same way that healthy people take action to reduce the likelihood that they will get sick.
Practicing preventive medicine	
Horticultural (147)	
Scything	Organizations can be seen as akin to trees or shrubs needing to "cut back" to improve their health. Organizations do this by removing staff who are excess to requirements.
Pruning	
Mowing	
Get rid of deadwood	
Lopping	
Slash and burn	
Miscellaneous (158)	

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Negative Images

The fifth category of metaphors presents negative images of downsizing. Of the total number of metaphors identified in this research, 23% provided this perspective. The military/violence root analogy predominates, accounting for just under one-half of the images in this category. "Survivors," rather than being overwhelmed with relief and gratitude at retaining their jobs, are portrayed as "deeply wounded," as "casualties" whose experience of downsizing has left them with the outlook of "mercenaries" or shocked into a risk-averse "bunker mentality." The inference is that as in war, the outcome may leave those involved with a legacy that impairs rather than improves their capacity to act. The other core analogy is body/medical. Some of these turn an original metaphor "back on itself," for example, "slimming" is now associated with becoming "too thin," "anorexic," or "anemic." The inference is that the organization's capacity to act may be detrimentally affected due to "muscle as well as fat" being lost. Survivors are described as "dazed" or "paralyzed," with "scars that take a long time to heal." The wisdom of some downsizing decisions is further called into question through reference to the pervasiveness of downsizing being the result of an "addiction" or "fetish" (see Table 4.5).

Table 5. Metaphors for Negative Effects of Downsizing

Metaphor (387)	*Inference*
Military/Violence (181)	
Victims	Like war, downsizing can have consequences that may make the value of the action questionable.
Shell-shocked	
Carnage	
Deeply wounded	
Casualities	
Mercenaries	
Bunker mentality	
Siege mentality	
Panic in the ranks	
Grenade approach	
Shooting oneself in the foot	
Blown their brains out	
Body/Medical (107)	
Down to the bare bones	Just as weight reduction can leave a person in an unhealthy state, so layoffs can leave an organization insufficiently resourced to perform effectively.
Bulemic management	
Anemic management	
Cutting muscle as well as fat	

Table 5. Metaphors for Negative Effects of Downsizing (Cont.)

Metaphor (387)	*Inference*
Anorexia	
Paralyzed	
	Specific problems may include:
Scars take a long time to heal	Downsizing can cause damage to morale, sense of trust, and commitment.
Dazed	
Addiction	Downsizing can become a pattern of action disengaged from rational case-by-case analysis.
Binge	
Fetish	
Knee-jerk reaction	
Mourning	Survivors often take a while to deal emotionally with a sense of loss.
Grieving	
Trauma	
Burnout	Downsizing may cause increased work pressure to the extent that staff may not be able to cope.
Miscellaneous (99)	

Patterns of Metaphor Use Over Time

The ranking of metaphors that describe the five aspects of downsizing is very stable over time (see Figure 4.2) showing that there is a distinct consistency in the themes, and their relative weighting within the popular management discourse on downsizing. The sign test ($n = 8$, $p = 1/2$) confirms that metaphors dealing with how the downsizing process is handled are the most frequent ($p < .004$). Over the 8-year period they comprise an average of over 50% of the instances of metaphor use. Discussion of negative effects are the second most frequent ($p < .004$). There is no significant difference in ranking between those metaphors that deal with the internal conditions of predownsized organizations and those that deal with the internal conditions specified as necessary if organizations are to cope with changing environmental conditions. Metaphors that characterize the latter conditions rank last ($p < .004$).

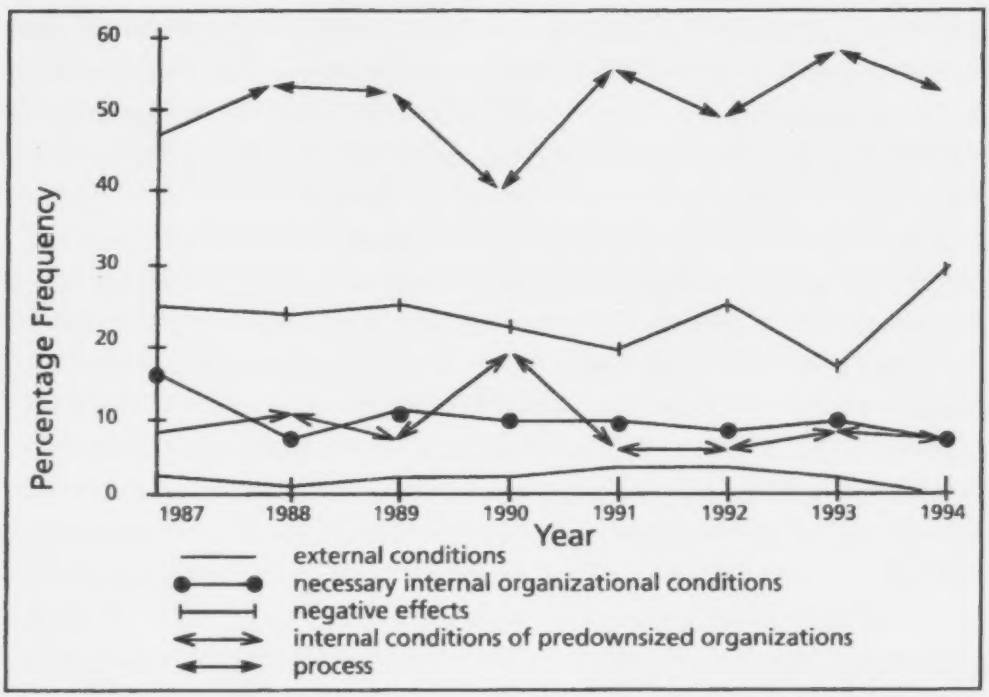

Figure 4.2.

The use of the sign test to test rankings was complemented by regression analysis to test the upward or downward trend over time of each of the aspects of downsizing. This showed that not only were the rankings remarkably consistent, the absolute level of the aspect (as a percentage of total metaphors) was consistent, the only exception being the emphasis on necessary internal conditions, which declined slightly over time ($p < .08$) (see Table 4.6).

Table 6. Regression Statistics for Aspects of Downsizing versus Time

	Aspects of Downsizing				
	External conditions	*Necessary internal conditions*	*Internal conditions of predownsized organizations*	*Process*	*Negative effects*
R Square	0.01	0.41	0.02	0.21	0.00
Standard Error	1.38	2.08	4.63	5.19	3.74
t Statistic	–0.22	–2.04	–0.37	1.25	–0.12
P Value	0.83	0.08	0.72	0.25	0.90

(2-tail test)

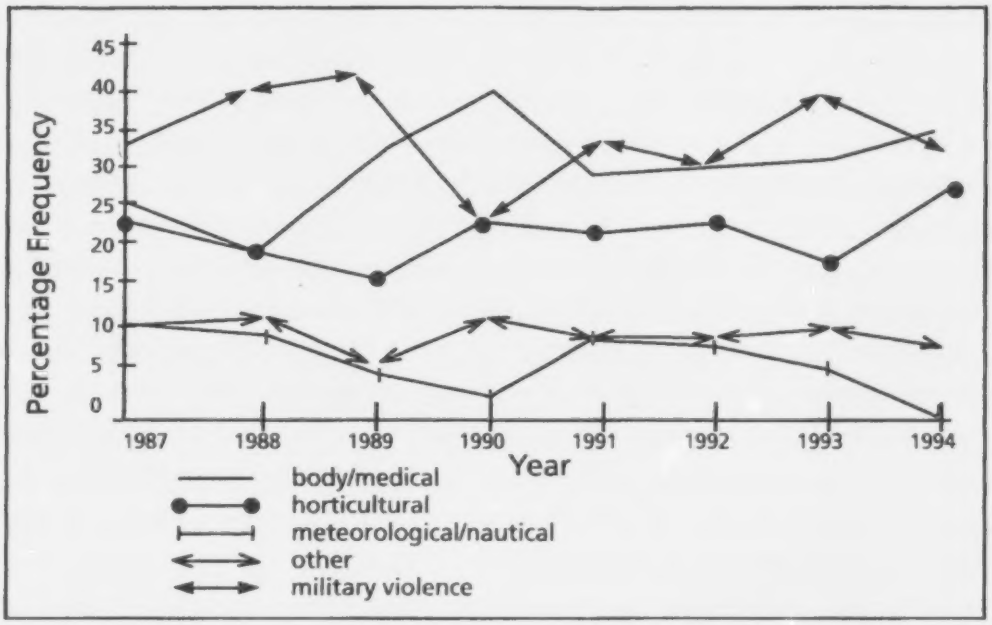

Figure 4.3. Root Metaphor vs Time

Similarly, the relative use of root analogies is very stable over time, in the sense of consistent ranking and a lack of trend (although, as Figure 4.3 indicates, the plots are spikier than before due to more random variation from year to year). The military/violence and body/medical root analogies are the top two, contributing 60%–75% of the metaphors across all eight years ($p < .035$). The military/violence analogy ranks first in 6 of these years, however, it would be unwise to read too much into this ($p < .14$). The residual "other" category ranks third ($p < .035$), followed by the horticultural analogy ($p < .035$).

Regression analysis confirms this picture of a consistent pattern with none of the root analogies exhibiting a relative growth or decline in its absolute level as a percentage of total metaphors (see Table 4.7).

Table 7. Regression Statistics for Root Analogy versus Time

	Root Analogy				
	Body/medical	*Horticultural*	*Meteorological*	*Military Violence*	*Other*
R Square	0.22	0.10	0.33	0.04	0.09
Standard Error	5.53	1.81	2.84	6.05	3.45
t Statistic	1.30	–0.81	–1.71	–0.51	0.78
P Value	0.24	0.45	0.13	0.63	0.46

(2-tail test)

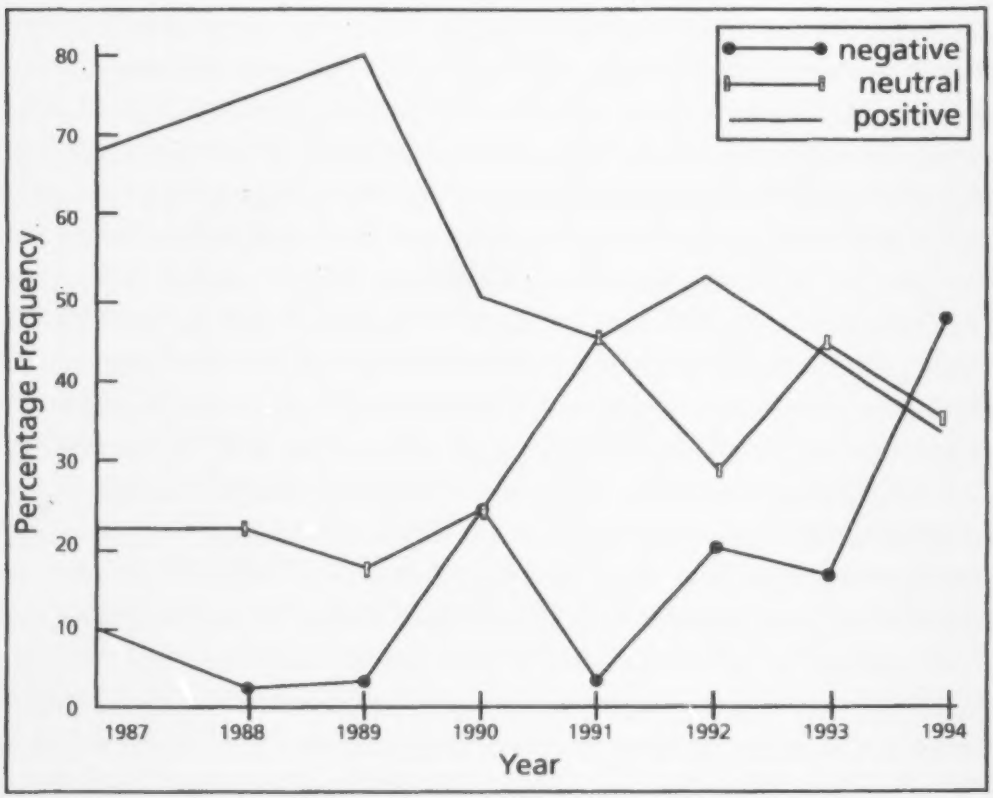

Figure 4.4. Article Tone vs Time.

A different picture is provided if analysis is directed toward the changing tone of articles over time (see Figure 4.4). The dominant tone over the first 4 years is positive, ranking first ($p < .063$) and comprising an average of 70% of the articles for this period. However, in the second 4-year period it is no longer distinguishable in ranking from those articles with a neutral tone. The positive tone ranks higher than the negative tone over the 8-year period ($p < .035$), but there is an indication (see below) that this ranking may be changing.

Regression analysis shows a clear trend over time for all three article tones. Those with a positive tone steadily decline over time ($p < .005$), those with a neutral tone steadily increase over time ($p < .06$), and those with a negative tone also increase ($p < .08$) (see Table 4.8).

Table 8. Regression Statistics for Article Tone versus Time

	Article Tone		
	Negative tone	*Neutral Tone*	*Positive Tone*
R Square	0.01	0.46	0.77
Standard Error	9.55	9.28	9.02
t Statistic	2.08	2.28	–4.51
P Value	0.08	0.06	0.005

(2-tail test)

SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION

The results of this research establish the existence of distinct naturalizing analogies that characterize the popular management literature on downsizing. The nature of the metaphors used to describe the internal organizational conditions required to cope with the changing nature of the business environment, and the current internal conditions of organizations, provide a mutually reinforcing view as to the need for downsizing. Body/medical metaphors provide an overwhelmingly dominant naturalizing analogy. As such, it represents a continuation of its "long history" as a naturalizing analogy used to legitimate organizational arrangements (Davis et al., 1994). However, whereas Davis and colleagues (1994) argue that the body is now being replaced as the key naturalizing analogy by that of the network, this research shows that it would be premature to announce the demise of the body analogy. The particular twist given to it in relation to downsizing is that it applies to organizations the language and logic from within societal discourse on "body care." The medical/body analogy is centered on body image and the societal value attached to being lean. The popular management literature on downsizing barely differentiates between being overweight and being ill, perhaps reflecting a societal level juxtaposition of the images lean/healthy and fat/unhealthy.

The dominant analogy changes when the literature moves to describing the downsizing process. At this point the military/violence analogy is dominant and directs attention toward conceiving downsizing as requiring military-like intervention. The emergence of this root analogy as the major bearer of discourse on the process of downsizing is consistent with the military origins of the concept of strategy and its continued significance within the strategy literature (D'Aveni, 1994; Hirsch & Andrews, 1983; Whittington, 1993). For example, D'Aveni (1994) characterizes the competitive market, which he labels "hypercompetition," as "all-out war" (1994, p. xvii) and the competing firms as "warring armies" (p. 16).

Together, the body/medical and military/violence analogies point to the way in which common linguistic archetypes underlie or structure the downsizing literature, the implication being that part of its appeal is achieved by drawing on ideas and concepts that are deemed commonplace and familiar in wider society. McKinley and colleagues (2000, p. 235) describe the cognitive effect of this to as "to frame downsizing as a natural, acceptable strategy...and, therefore, to submerge the possibility that downsizing is ineffective."

At the same time, the pattern of metaphor use revealed by the results raises an interesting issue related to the extent to which there is consistency in the micro-level processes of institutionalization. An underlying assumption in institutional theory is that isomorphism results from relatively consistent external pressures on organizations to change in particular ways. However, this study demonstrates that while downsizing is a pervasive organizational practice, a significant minority of the metaphors (23%) address the negative effects of downsizing. While the literature predominantly encourages managers to engage in downsizing, it is also clear that there is an inconsistency in this message, that is, at least part of it cautions managers regarding the perils of utilizing this practice. This suggests that in our understanding of the process of institutionalization, we need to be sensitive to the interplay between divergent views. In particular, the existence of alternative views should act as a caution against overstating the homogeneity of institutionalization processes.

The results raise questions about the relationship between naturalizing analogies and strategic choice with regard to change practices. For Greenwood and Hinings (1996), the capacity for change depends on the dominant coalition recognizing the weakness of the existing "template" ("schema") and being aware of potential alternatives. In a complementary vein, Goodrick and Salancik (1996) have argued that where institutional prescriptions and the particularistic interests of an organization are in conflict, the latter is most likely to dominate where there is some uncertainty as to institutional standards.

Of particular significance in relation to the issue of naturalizing analogies is the way in which a limited number of root analogies—specifically the body/medical and military/violence analogies—have dominated the literature even within the images that relate to negative aspects of downsizing. The latter seems to be due to the ability of these analogies to be used in a way that involves "turning them on their head." For example, images of "slim" and "lean" are reconstructed as "anorexic," and "thinning the ranks" is reframed as "carnage." Perhaps the image is all the more stark, and the impact greater, through the juxtaposition of images from the dominant analogy.

This research was located within a framework that asked if language matters—in particular if it is constitutive and not just descriptive—within what analogies does the popular management literature frame its discussion of downsizing? The underlying argument was that naturalizing analogies provide templates or actions for engaging in organizational changes (such as downsizing) insofar as they resonate with more fundamental language archetypes with which managers (and others) are comfortable. While the actions may seem radical—prior to their institutionalization—the language for articulating these actions remains familiar. This provides managers or other dominant coalitions with the means to provide plausible templates both to themselves and to others within their organization. Naturalizing analogies provide the cognitive legitimacy (Suchman, 1995) associated with generating shared understandings.

However, the existence of a critique from within the dominant naturalizing analogies provides a fracturing of the hegemonic effect of these analogies and may constitute the basis for the state of ambiguity that Goodrich and Salancik (1996) argue facilitates action upon particularistic interests. However, further research is needed on the effect of dissenting voices within the naturalizing analogies. For example, is the relationship asymmetrical in the sense that those metaphors in the literature that provide a dissenting view typically filtered out by managers? And if so, under what conditions does this not occur? Perhaps managers may accept the critique but exempt their organizations? Or, extrapolating from Goodrich and Salancik, it may be that the dissenting views are responded to rather than filtered out when managers have a perception that the institutionally dominant prescription conflicts with actions that would be in their particular organization's interests.

Finally, this research also contributes to our understanding of the way in which institutional factors may coexist with competitive factors as determinants of organizational actions (Budros, 1999; Dacin, 1997; Deephouse, 1999; Oliver, 1997). Competitive factors can provide pressure for change, however, institutional factors are important in the process of legitimation. What this also suggests is that while managers may be "performance-seeking," in the sense that the prospect of performance enhancement is a key criterion for the adoption of a new practice, they may not be "performance-sensitive," in that the perceived rationality of a practice may reduce sensitivity to reports of performance. This is consistent with the established tendency for individuals to discount "schema-incongruent information" (McKinley et al., 2000, p. 237). It also raises questions as to whether adopter organizations are as consciously monitoring accumulating evidence of the efficacy of the adopted practice as suggested by Tolbert and Zucker (1996).

This research has provided firm evidence of the existence of naturalizing analogies in the process of institutionalization of downsizing. However, there are limitations associated with this research. Although it is longitudinal, it remains one case. Further research applying the same framework to a range of other cases is needed to make it clearer just how common naturalizing analogies are in the process of institutionalization.

NOTES

1. An earlier version of this chapter was included in the conference proceedings of the 1996 Conference of the Australia and New Zealand Academy of Management. Thanks are due to Bill McKinley for his comments on this earlier version.
2. Interrater reliability was calculated using the following formula (Holsti, 1969): CR = 2D/(N + M), where D is the number of coding decisions on which the two coders are in agreement; N and M are the number of coding decisions made by the two coders, respectively.
3. The same formula was used as in the pilot study (see Footnote 1).
4. Thanks are due to Harvey Wright for his help with the data search and coding of articles, and to Bob Cavana and Peter Smith for statistical advice.
5. The numbers in brackets that appear in this and subsequent tables refer to the frequency with which the particular metaphor or root analogy appears.

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CHAPTER 5

A GROUNDED LEADERSHIP THEORY WITH INSIGHTS INTO ENTREPRENEURSHIP

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ABSTRACT

This chapter begins with a description of a general, macro theory of leadership developed using a grounded approach to theory development. Based on the notion that entrepreneurial behavior is a form of leadership, it then presents a subsequent study employing a more quantitative design that tests the general theory. The test is based upon the study of a sample of 48 small businesses. It confirms and lends specificity to leadership within an entrepreneurial context. The chapter concludes with a discussion of key strategic decisions facing researchers developing grounded theories and offers some reflections on the nature of leadership.

Efforts at theory creation are driven by the needs to generalize and understand. Glaser and Strauss's (1967) theory of grounded research began by observing that the process of theory generation is profoundly different from the more structured and relatively simpler process of testing hypotheses that arise from theory. Instead of leaving theory creation up to inspired conjecture, they argued for direct interaction with and observation of the people and the social phenomenon to be investigated. Rather than forcing observations into an existing theoretical mold, grounded research

attempts to look at the evidence through the trained eyes of the sociologist and allow the theory to arise or surface from direct observation. It differs from investigative journalism in that the observations are placed into naturally occurring categories; abstract constructs are extracted from these categories; and a theory is created by establishing rational linkages existing among these constructs. The emergent theory that arises should have a close correspondence to reality.

This grounded research approach was used by Sooklal (1991) to formulate a general theory of leadership. In his study Sooklal focused on producing a macro theory of leadership, which, for the purposes of this work, can be defined as follows: *Leadership, in its most general form, is the development of a leadership dream and its implementation within a social arena.* This definition arguably embraces dictatorial leadership, "evil" leadership, "saintly" leadership, and leadership within a democratic milieu. The guiding principle was the aim to produce a "good theory," which could subsequently be validated or rejected by subsequent empirical and experiential evidence. In this context a "good theory" was regarded as one that focused upon concepts arising from categories indicated by data. It further had to reach for a diversity of concepts and the integration of such concepts to produce a meaningful picture that enables the reader to relate the theory to his/her own experience (Glaser & Strauss, 1967).

Sooklal's macro theory of leadership was subsequently tested empirically by Hanlon (1999) in a manner that shed interesting insights into the nature of entrepreneurship. In the context of this chapter, this work makes two contributions: (1) it provides an important validation of Sooklal's macro theory of leadership by examining its power and applicability in a context differing substantially from that in which the original theory was developed, and (2) in applying the general theory to an entrepreneurial milieu, Hanlon developed a "middle range" theory that would be of particular interest to entrepreneurs in the process of establishing themselves.

In keeping with this introduction, the remainder of this chapter is in three sections. First, we present an overview of Sooklal's leadership theory, which is elucidated more fully in Sooklal (1991) and Sooklal and Hanlon (2001). Next, we summarize the key issues and findings stemming from Hanlon's (1999) work. Finally, we offer conclusions concerning the potential for the complementary contribution of diverse research perspectives to advance the process of theory development.

ELEMENTS OF SOOKLAL'S MACRO THEORY

Sooklal's approach was to begin with someone who had received widespread recognition as a leader and to conduct a retrospective analysis of his behav-

ior while he was engaged in the struggle that subsequently generated this recognition. The individual of choice was an auditor general of Canada. There had been, between the auditor general's office on the one hand and parliament and the public service on the other, a strong and historic adversarial relationship. It was quite surprising, therefore, when this auditor general succeeded in getting the political arm of government to pass legislation, resulting in a highly significant increase in independence and power of his office. That such a change was made without rancor and to the "applause" of both political and bureaucratic arms of government, political opposition parties, and media commentators was truly remarkable.

Values as the Core of Leadership Vision

While practicing as a corporate accountant and long before he was asked to assume the role of auditor general, the "leader," like many Canadians, was deeply troubled by the perennial waste in government spending revealed by the auditor general's office. Unlike most Canadians, however, he saw "irresponsible spending on public programs" as a problem that had its origins in a deeply rooted lack of public accountability by both public servants and politicians. Awareness of this background led to the notion that the leadership vision was rooted in and driven by values that were shared but not powerfully articulated within the social or constituent arena within which leadership vision must eventually be articulated. Additional documentary evidence to support this notion resulted in the first of 12 propositions resulting from Sooklal's study (1991): *Personal vision is an imagined possibility that is based upon either a single personal value or a family of compatible and mutually reinforcing set of personal values.*

Vision and Dream

At the grounded level, Sooklal (1991) found it necessary to make a distinction between vision and dream. What he found was that vision was the imagined possibility of a future state that is poorly articulated and tenuously connected to reality, but which generates excitement and vitality within the possessor. It was a reality-driven definition that was previously articulated by Levinson and his colleagues (1978). For example, when the "would-be" leader assumed the office as Auditor General of Canada, the notion of comprehensive auditing did not exist. He knew that he wanted to somehow create an auditing process that would result in a very high degree of public accountability within both the parliamentary and bureaucratic arms of government. The deep commitment to the restoration of public

accountability and the opportunity to make a difference motivated him from within.

The grounded concept of a leadership dream was, on the other hand, a very dynamic construct that grew in complexity as the leader consulted, negotiated and interacted with others. The leadership dream was defined as an evolving, rational, reality-based set of social expectations that are derived from personal vision (Sookal, 1991). Over time, this dream grew in detail and complexity. Whereas the leadership vision was a personal construct that was owned by an individual proponent, the leadership dream was a gradually evolving social construct that was in the process of acquiring a life of its own. This process of giving a "social identity" to a personal vision is essentially a political process.

Leadership Support System

The transition from vision to dream occurs through a gradual and voluntary process in which the leader relinquishes ownership of his vision. Crafting of this social dream is done through a process of exchange between the leader, acting as the "guardian" of his vision, and individuals and groups in command of the moral and material sustenance that is necessary for the development and growth of the leadership dream. For some strategically positioned individuals, the growth and development of this social dream can reinforce their values. For others it can present pragmatic opportunities or threats. The former are in effect value-based supporters or joint guardians of the integrity of the leadership dream. The latter are, in effect, people with the wherewithal to suffocate the leadership dream or allow and help it to grow. They are called "convenience-based supporters." The task of the leader is to seek timely counseling and advice from value-based supporters and to convert convenience-based adversaries into supporters.

As to their strategic positioning, some of these individuals occupied senior positions within the auditor general's office while others were located outside the organization and therefore beyond the formal authority of the leader. These people are called "insiders" and "outsiders," respectively. The resulting architecture of this support system is illustrated in Figure 5.1.

		Motivational Source	
		Value	***Convenience***
Strategic Position	Outside	Value-based outsiders	Convenience-based outsiders
	Inside	Value-based insiders	Convenience-based insiders

Figure 5.1. Leadership support system.

At the generic level, Sooklal's (1991) paper presents evidence and argues that the structure of the leadership support system is one which is common to both simple and contemporary societal contexts. There is evidence to suggest that the structure of this support system has both existed and endured over time (e.g., Bailey, 1969; Barth, 1965). Not only does this evidence support the existence of the leadership support system, but it also illustrates the type of multidisciplinary research partnership that we are, in part, advocating in this chapter.

Networking

Transition of the leadership vision to a leadership dream takes place through consultation with a stakeholder support system. In its ultimate form the leadership dream becomes a blueprint for action. It assumes the form of a strategic plan but far more importantly it becomes the expression of a "sacred" social contract that exists between the leader, on one hand, and each member of his support system, on the other. Unilateral changes to this blueprint will be perceived as an act of betrayal and result in the gradual, if not abrupt, loss of leadership credibility. If commitment within the support system is to develop and grow, changes to the blueprint must be negotiated.

The support system shown in Figure 5.1 was not the result of an overall master plan. It evolved in an organic way and was only identified "after the fact" through research. As this organic process unfolded, the leader acted as the "guardian" of his vision, gradually "letting go" as what was initially a fragile social dream gathered supporter strength sufficient to both withstand hostile scrutiny and gain the resources necessary for its physical realization in a social arena.

The first network cluster to be consulted was the value-based outsiders. Consultation at this very initial stage involved scrutinizing the integrity of the personal vision, assessing its social feasibility, and identifying those convenience-based outsiders whose early support was vital for the eventual survival and development of the leadership dream. The leadership vision was then exposed to value-based insiders. After the support of value-based insiders was secured, the evolving leadership dream was scrutinized and amended through a series of negotiating encounters between the leader and various constituents of the convenience-based outsider segment of the leadership support system.

A special note on the significance of the leader's initial consultation with his value-based insiders is perhaps necessary at this point. It was at this stage that what was heretofore a personal vision began the process of "metamorphosis" that resulted in the evolution of a social dream. Acting as

they did out of a sense of loyalty to the leader, these value-based insiders were not primarily concerned with the integrity of the dream. They did not have veto influence over the dream but were able to and did delay the overall process until such time as they could informally sound out convenience-based insider concerns and brief the leader prior to his networking with convenience-based outsiders. Initial "sounding out" of convenience-based insiders was, for the most part, focused upon concerns that were technical and pragmatic in nature. This process of gaining acquiescence and subsequent acceptability and commitment assumed the form of a muted and progressive brokerage process where the leader traded off marginal aspects of the evolving dream in exchange for support. The dream was also internally refined and modified, without damage to its core value.

Brokerage transactions with convenience-based outsiders were very stressful because, as was mentioned before, they occurred in a deeply entrenched adversarial climate. Though not openly acknowledged, both sides, the auditor general's office and the public servants whose support was identified as being critical for the survival of the dream, had a vested interest in moderating this counterproductive adversarial climate.

Further consultation between the leader and convenience-based insiders also took place. Realistic concerns about the capacity, both intellectual and physical, of the auditor general's office to implement decisions and new processes arising from the leadership dream were identified and addressed. Internally, the hiring of new staff, salary reclassification to reflect change in responsibilities, training and development programs, and library and other resource bases that were linked to change served to shift the "needle" of internal convenience-based support from acquiescence to acceptance. Commitment came as the actual challenging and mind-stretching work was being tackled by these convenience-based insiders.

Comfort and Excitement

An important comment arose in interviews with some individuals who worked on some of the many special studies involved in looking at the structure of the auditor general's office and in some of the many studies on scholarly and technical aspects of comprehensive auditing. They claimed, in retrospect, that it was the most exciting work they had done thus far in their entire careers. When pressed to explain why this was so they all mentioned the nature of the task itself but then went on to comment that they did not have to "fight" for project sustenance, that complaints by others who were suspicious about the value of what they were doing were instantly dismissed by the leader, thereby giving recognition and worth to projects before they were completed. This sense of confidence in what they were

doing at the time had a tremendous impact on their sense of personal well-being.

As he was engaged in the process of translating intention into reality, timing and emotion were essential interpersonal ingredients that permeated the entire process. The leader did point out that one of the freedoms that came with office was the prerogative to act and take decisions when one was internally "comfortable" with what one was doing. This executive comfort factor seems to be connected with Erikson's (1963) theory of epigenetic development. In healthy personal development, change and growth are affected by the timing of decisions, interaction with one's environment, and the natural "logic" of epigenetic development.

As was mentioned in Sooklal's paper, personal or epigenetic change can be visualized as involving a sequential layering process. In healthy development this change follows a natural unfolding process, the sequence being hope, willpower, purpose, competence, fidelity, love, care, and wisdom (Erikson, 1963). Hope, it should be noted, is the cornerstone of development. As hope begins to plateau, willpower surfaces and this layering process continues, subject to environment and time. This, Sooklal submits, is why the leader took the time that he did in order to internalize internally dissonant advice. To do otherwise he would have become a slave to his environment. Similarly, before he could bring hope to others he must, himself, at the caratectic level, have hope. The confidence and support that he brought to his key subordinates was but a manifestation of the fidelity mentioned above. Likewise, the comfort factor was but an indication of the internal emotional development that was the supporting power behind action.

HANLON'S STUDY: TESTING SOOKLAL'S THEORY IN AN ENTREPRENEURIAL SETTING[1]

Research Context

In contrast to many leadership theories that have evolved to explain leadership processes in the management of large private sector organizations, Sooklal's (1991) original effort was concerned with developing a broad-based theory of leadership having the potential to apply to a variety of situational contexts. General or "grand" theories at this level tend to sacrifice detail and situation-specific variables, focusing instead on key constructs and processes that appear to be universally applicable. A key issue for any theory, however, is the extent to which the theory "works" or holds up in actual settings—in other words, to what extent is the theory valid?

From a researcher's perspective, a theory's validity can be extended by a variety of means. One approach, for example, might entail the discovery of similar findings by another researcher using an identical or similar approach to that of the original researcher. Other means of extending validity, however, might include the employment of different methodological approaches, the utilization of different samples in theoretically similar contexts (e.g., replication in other geographic locales), and, in the case of general theories, the application and testing of the theory in theoretically diverse contexts. In general, a theory's power can be seen to stem from its ability to explain underlying processes and to successfully predict outcomes. To the extent that convergence of results is achieved by studies employing disparate and diverse methods and/or under different conditions, the validity of a theory can be seen to be enhanced.

Hanlon's study sought to extend the validity of Sooklal's work in two ways. First, to our knowledge it was the first such study aimed at applying Sooklal's leadership to a theoretical context located firmly outside the realm of a traditional management setting. Second, and again to our knowledge, it was the first study to attempt to validate the theory by employing a methodology substantially different from the qualitative grounded theory approach used by Sooklal. More specifically, a major goal of Hanlon's study was to achieve a convergence with Sooklal's findings, ultimately using a quantitative rather than qualitative approach.

Study Overview: Purpose, Issues, and Tradeoffs

According to Amit, Glosten, and Muller (1993), a major goal of entrepreneurship theory is to explain variation in the performance of entrepreneurs and their ventures. In response to this challenge, Hanlon's study seeks to determine whether and to what extent Sooklal's grounded theory of leadership is capable of accounting for differences in the overall strength of resources assembled by entrepreneurs in the course of building their ventures, as well as differences in the subsequent performance of their new ventures. An assumption of this research, therefore, is that new venture performance provides at least one meaningful indication of the successful realization of the entrepreneur's original vision.

Although the implications of Sooklal's theory for organizational performance were not absent from his original work, linkages to performance tended to be more implicit than explicit because they were outside the boundary of the scope of his original study. Overall, then, Hanlon's study can be seen to constitute a test of the original theory that is somewhat more stringent than necessary from a purely theoretical perspective, but

one that at the same time might be perceived as highly pertinent and useful from the perspective of the practitioner.

In the course of shifting from the level of a general theory potentially applicable to all leadership contexts to a more specific context such as that of entrepreneurship, a researcher is presented with the opportunity to capitalize on and integrate prior knowledge pertinent to that context. Subsequent modifications to the general theory during the course of the adaptation process may result in what has come to be known as "middle-range" theorizing. Entrepreneurship is still a relatively young discipline and there were few established theories or even consistent bodies of findings from which one could draw to augment or strengthen the "resolution" of Sooklal's theory. Nevertheless, a review of the literature concerning vision, support for small businesses, personal networks and social support did indeed prove useful, both in terms of enhancing the resolution of the original theory and in the course of "operationalizing" or developing suitable measures of the theoretical constructs.

It has been said that in the process of research the central decision confronting the researcher is not *whether* tradeoffs will be made, but rather *which* tradeoffs will be made. The shift from a context of general theory to that of middle-range theory in combination with the shift from a qualitative to quantitative approach raised several issues for which there was no "right or wrong" solution, yet decisions had to be, and were, made. These differences will become more apparent in subsequent sections, but for now we will highlight some of the major ones in order to emphasize some key differences between the original grounded theory approach taken by Sooklal and that were adopted for this study.

First, while Hanlon's study draws on the central elements of Sooklal's theory, it does not attempt a direct test of Sooklal's entire theoretical contribution. In particular, Sooklal's theoretical notions concerning the epigenetic development of the leader have deliberately been excluded. On the other hand, the study does emphasize the entrepreneur's vision and the notion of a support system comprised of insiders and outsiders and value- and convenience-based supporters. Second, in the current study there is an assumption, rather than explicit examination, of process. Hanlon's study is cross-sectional in design and retrospective in nature; both of these factors, it is readily acknowledged, constitute significant limitations of the study. Moreover, the cross-sectional design resulted in a greater emphasis on original vision as opposed to the subsequent leadership dream.

A third important difference between the two studies concerns the nature and underlying intentions of the methodological approaches. Sooklal's grounded theory approach was qualitative in nature and provided numerous examples capable of being described in rich and vivid detail. In contrast, Hanlon's study adopted an empirical, quantitative

approach in order to measure the importance and impact of the processes comprising Sooklal's theory. This focus raised the new and important issue of the degree to which the observed indicators employed in the quantitative study accurately measured their underlying theoretical constructs. Although qualitative and quantitative approaches have often been treated as separate and distinct philosophical "camps" by researchers, we intend to demonstrate that they constitute complementary approaches in the process of theory development.

Two additional differences between the studies warrant mention. First, as a result of the situational context of the study (i.e., that of entrepreneurship) and the outcome of the related literature review, Hanlon's study places considerable emphasis on the actual support and resources garnered by the entrepreneur. Second, and again as a result of the literature review, the theoretical model actually tested disassembles the construct of entrepreneurial vision into three subconstructs, which reflect the cognitive structure and the content of entrepreneurial vision.

Middle-Range Theory and Hypotheses Development

As cognitive constructs, visions can be distinguished by their structure and by their content (Hanlon, 1999). Westley and Mintzberg (1988) have argued that visions are complex images and that visions should be associated with a complex cognitive structure. If this is the case, then visions associated with a complex cognitive structure should be more effective than visions low in complexity. Effective visions provide the entrepreneur with a clearer sense of direction and understanding of what needs to be done, thus assisting in the "framing" of the scripting process needed to acquire necessary resources for the new venture. Effective visions also facilitate the process of leadership brokerage by enabling entrepreneurs to communicate their vision to others in a fashion that is both compelling and more easily understood by potential supporters. Consequently, we hypothesized that vision complexity would have a positive impact on the overall strength of support provided by the entrepreneur's support system.

Vision "reach" or ambitiousness is an underresearched yet seemingly important property of vision content concerning the discrepancy between the current state and the state depicted in the idealized future portrayed by the vision. Visions characterized by greater reach or ambition should provide greater challenge and stronger motivation to a leader's supporters (Conger & Kanungo, 1988), leading us to hypothesize a positive relationship between vision reach and the strength of the support provided by the entrepreneur's support system. The impact of vision reach also was expected to extend beyond support strength, however. Because vision pro-

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vides a context for an organization's mission and goals (Morris, 1987), greater reach should also be associated with higher aspirations for the firm. We therefore hypothesized that greater reach would be associated with stronger venture performance.

There is a growing body of evidence that the content of entrepreneurial visions addresses both internal and external dimensions of the firm. The external component of central vision focuses on the place the entrepreneur wants his products to occupy in the marketplace and includes not only products but also embraces the market or clientele, whereas the internal component focuses on the kind of organization that needs to be created in order to achieve this (Filion, 1990, 1991). A focus on internal/external aspects of the firm should affect the composition of an entrepreneur's support system of supporters. An emphasis on a certain dimension, for example, should highlight the need for particular types of resources, while the increased salience of an emphasized dimension also should be more effective both in highlighting resource gaps and in motivating potential supporters. Consequently, a "balanced" vision focus with respect to internal and external firm dimensions was hypothesized to have a positive impact on the diversity of the insider and outsider supporters comprising the entrepreneur's support system.

Sooklal's theory emphasized the importance of assembling a diverse group of supporters, including insiders and outsiders and value- and convenience-based supporters. Network theory also has attributed important benefits to diversity. Incestuous networks may provide information limited. in scope, whereas divergent sources can provide differing perspectives and a greater variety of information (Birley, Meyers, & Cromie, 1989). Diverse networks also should provide a greater diversity of resources required for the founding process (Aldrich., Rosen, & Woodward, 1987). Greater supporter diversity, in terms of both value—versus convenience—based supporters and insider versus outsider supporters, therefore was expected to contribute to greater strength of received support.

In addition to providing access to more and higher quality resources, greater supporter diversity also should broaden the scope of opportunities open to entrepreneurs (Dubini & Aldrich, 1991). Research on industry structure has firmly established that the quality of the opportunity can have an impact on the subsequent performance of the firm (Timmons, Smollen, & Dingee, 1990). In addition to contributing positively to support strength, therefore, both value/convenience-based diversity and insider/outsider supporter diversity were hypothesized to contribute positively to firm performance.

Central to Sooklal's leadership theory was the notion that the support provided by the leader's support system was fundamental to realizing the vision. In the case of entrepreneurship, the entrepreneur's venture can be

seen to represent the manifestation of his/her vision. The positive impact of received support on firm performance is also a central tenet of research on the personal networks of entrepreneurs and research concerning formal (i.e., government-sponsored) support for small firms. Here the relevant theoretical perspectives are those of resource dependence, which maintains that firms are dependent on their environments for needed resources, and a resource-based view of the firm, which argues that a firm's competitive advantage stems from the nature of the resources it controls. Consequently, our final hypothesis was that the strength of the support marshaled by the entrepreneur would contribute to firm performance.

By way of summary, we have integrated several outcomes from a review of the literature to augment Sooklal's grounded theory in an entrepreneurial context. At the same time, we were careful not to lose or disrupt the essential features of the original theory. Rather than transforming Sooklal's theory into something bearing little resemblance to its original form, we argue that we have instead enhanced its resolution and power through the incorporation of prior knowledge concerning the nature of vision, the personal networks of entrepreneurs, and the entrepreneurial process. Moreover, in the course of adapting Sooklal's general theory to an entrepreneurial context we have de-emphasized the political aspects of support while placing increased emphasis on the actual resources provided by supporters through the addition of the construct "support strength."

Figure 5.2 depicts the theoretical constructs as well as the hypothesized relationships between these constructs. Together, they constitute a theoretical model that has been derived from Sooklal's general theory but that now might best be described as middle-range theory in view of the fact that the model was developed explicitly for an entrepreneurial context. The model consists of seven theoretical constructs and nine hypothesized relationships between constructs. In the diagram each theoretical construct is represented by a circle and each hypothesis is represented by an arrow depicting the nature and direction of an expected relationship. It also can be seen that the model contains three outcome variables. More specifically, in seeking to determine the extent to which Sooklal's theory "makes a difference," the model seeks to measure the impact of the predictor variables on insider/outsider supporter diversity, the strength of support garnered by the entrepreneur, and overall venture performance.

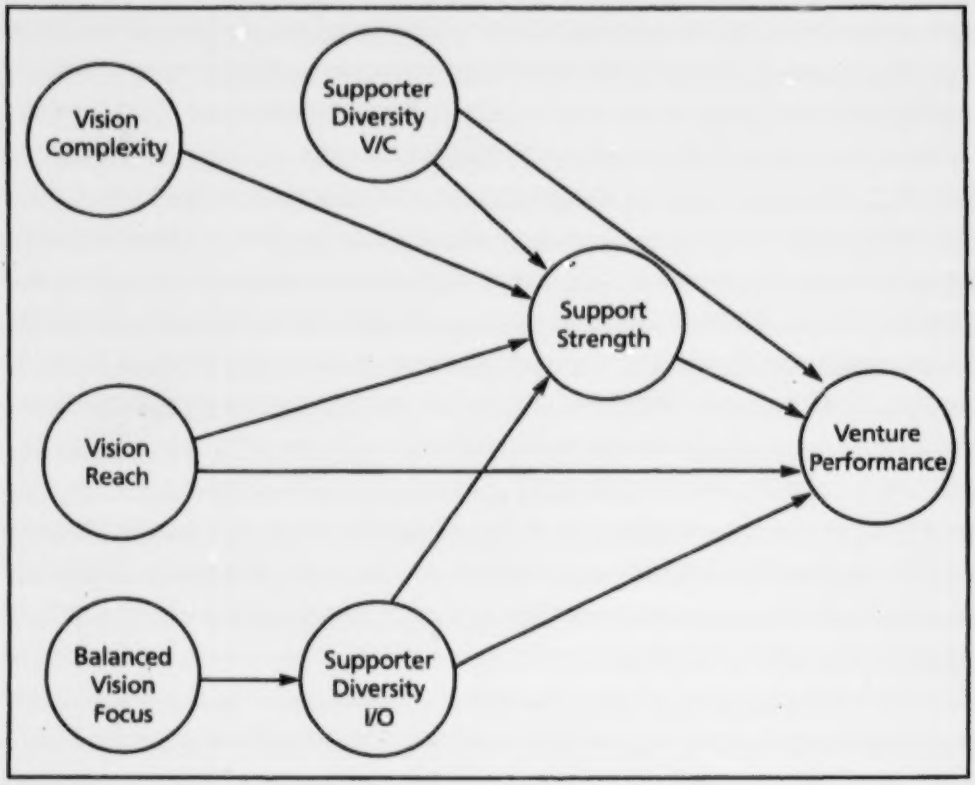

Figure 5.2. Theoretical model: Constructs and hypotheses.

Methodology

Several stages of research were needed to carry out the study. The first two phases were used to develop the instrumentation for measuring entrepreneurial vision. Phase 3 consisted of a small pilot study comprising interviews with a random sample of 12 entrepreneurs who had been nominated for a major entrepreneurship award; several supporters were also interviewed during this phase for validation purposes. Finally, Phase 4 was used to formally test Sooklal's theory. In Phase 4 semi-structured interviews were held with the lead entrepreneurs of a random sample of 50 recent startups (all firms were 3 years old). Because it was revealed during the interviews that two firms did not meet the criteria for inclusion, the final sample consisted of 48 entrepreneurs.

While it is beyond the scope of this chapter to describe the measures in detail, it can be said that 18 individual indicators were used measure the seven theoretical variables. The use of multiple measures permitted the assessment of the accuracy of the measures and also allowed measurement error to be taken into account when estimating the impact of a variable,

thereby resulting in more accurate estimates. Most measures consisted of moderately complex summary indices and arguably contained more information than Likert-type indicators. It is notable that the construct support strength represented an attempt to capture both the quality and "quantity" of received support, whereas previous efforts to study support have tended to focus on quantity only. In this study the term "quantity of support" indicates that a supporter providing both strategic information and financial resources was considered to have provided a greater amount of support than a supporter providing only one form of support.

The entrepreneur's support system was identified by asking the entrepreneurs to identify those individuals whom they considered to have been "key" to helping them achieve their goals in starting the business. After considerable deliberation it was decided to treat both the insider/outsider dimension and the value-/convenience-based dimension of a supporter relationship as continuums rather than strict dichotomies. The insider/outsider dimension was particularly problematic because one needed to decide how best to deal with the "preorganizational" (Katz & Gartner, 1988) period. During the time period prior to the existence of the organization the terms "insider" and "outsider" lose their conventional meaning as one of the requisite properties of an organization, "boundary," has not yet been established. Moreover, even in the case of established organizations, Dibben and Scott (1995) have offered compelling arguments that it is often unclear where the organization ends and the environment begins. In the end we based our notion of insider status on relationships reflecting strong structural ties, including family, employees, and shareholders.

Findings

Searching for Entrepreneurship: Where Does Sooklal's Theory Apply?

Few, if any, embark on the research process in the hope that the assumptions underlying their research turn out to be unfounded. Nevertheless, it is also true that some of the most important insights to be gained from research arise from the surprises and unexpected findings that one encounters. One such finding emerging during the course of the research was that entrepreneurship is a process more likely to be associated with situational contexts than it is with individuals. This unintended result surfaced during the pilot phase of the research, the objectives of which had been to validate the methodology and sampling frame prior to undertaking the major portion of the study. The sample for the pilot study consisted of a random sample of individuals nominated for a major entrepreneurship award, with the assumption underpinning the sampling decision

being that the sample could indeed be defined as "entrepreneurial" in nature.

At the time of the pilot interviews the firms in the sample were quite diverse in terms of age, stage of development, and the nature of the activities occupying the attention of management. The majority of firms could be considered to have reached a mature stage of development as they had attained a relatively stable level of performance in terms of sales and profitability and were not actively pursuing growth, nor were they contemplating a significant change of strategy. For this group the most significant project being undertaken at the time of the research entailed the construction of a new and larger facility (which appeared to be needed to accommodate past growth rather than future anticipated growth). For the most part, however, these stable firms tended to be occupied by routine, day-to-day activities more representative of the directing and controlling functions of management than they were of entrepreneurial behavior. In addition, two firms operating in cyclical industries were engaged in pursuing strategies to achieve income stabilization, in one case through diversification and in another case by a careful, gradual transition in the nature of the business. In both of these instances the focus of the firms' key activities tended to comprise the planning and organizing functions of management. Although fundamental changes in the nature of the firms' activities were being pursued, in both instances the approach to change could best be described as calculated, systematic, and incremental in nature. In short, the process of change was being "managed."

In only three instances did vision surface as the powerful, driving force one would have expected to find on the basis of Sooklal's leadership theory. In one case a firm was engaged in extraordinarily rapid growth with the goal of becoming a world-class industry leader (a goal subsequently achieved). A second case involved a firm that had been recently taken over by a new owner while in a bankrupt situation and that was attempting a turnaround at the time of the interviews. The third situation involved a recent startup. In each of these instances the richness and emotional force of the interviewee's vision was striking. In the case of the turnaround, for example, the firm was viewed as a vehicle for transforming the entire rural community in which it was located, capable of providing residents with a revitalized sense of self-worth and belonging, and instilling in the community a new sense of prosperity, vibrancy, and purpose. The vision associated with the startup, though smaller in scale, was similarly passionate, entailing the culmination of an enduring ambition for a highly specialized professional practice embodying the highest possible standards of ethical conduct and service quality. This vision proved sufficiently compelling to motivate an independent coworker at the entrepreneur's previous

employer to volunteer to resign from a permanent position in order to work in the new firm without any compensation whatsoever.

To summarize, despite the fact that each of the individuals in the sample had been nominated as an exemplary entrepreneur in a highly prestigious competition, it turned out that vision was only an important factor in firms actively engaged in "nonroutine" activities, including the startup process and the attempting of bold strategic "leaps." Firms that had settled into stability and even those growing incrementally in a controlled, calculated manner tended to be occupied by routine tasks that fall within the domain of management rather than entrepreneurship. Assuming that the members of the sample had indeed exhibited entrepreneurial behavior in the past, the results suggested that entrepreneurship is better associated with situational contexts than it is with individuals. In other words, instead of asking "*Who* is an entrepreneur?" (Carland, Hoy, & Carland, 1988), the more relevant question might be "*When* is an entrepreneur?" Viewed today, the professional practice described above would likely be described as a "lifestyle" firm in its current context, having settled into a mature, stable, and routine mode of operation. The owner has no desire for further growth, as growth is felt to compromise the values that served to motivate the creation of the firm in the first place. Such firms and their owners are seldom associated with entrepreneurial characteristics by outside observers. Nevertheless, this same individual had been driven by a vivid and passionately held vision only a few years prior during the startup phase of the business.

Neither entrepreneurship nor visionary leadership is rooted in the management process. By their very nature both are manifestations of exceptional, nonroutine activities. Both are disruptive, seeking to alter, rather than reinforce, the status quo. While we do not deny the existence of certain individuals, including serial entrepreneurs who seem to thrive on this type of activity, the results of the pilot phase suggest that for most people such activity stems from contextual situations giving rise to a need to transform the environment in some way rather than from an enduring personality characteristic. In most cases the process serves as a means to an end rather than an end in itself. In searching for entrepreneurship, therefore, it appears more useful and productive to look for extraordinary situational contexts that are conducive to and demanding of entrepreneurial behavior, and hence vision, rather than focusing upon extraordinary individuals. As predicted by Mintzberg (1990) and in line with our findings, startup, turnaround, and other situations demanding bold "leaps" are more likely to provide such contexts. Consequently, it was decided for the final phase of the research process (Phase Four) to restrict the sample to startup firms.

The Nature of Entrepreneurial Vision

One means of analyzing and differentiating among visions of entrepreneurs is to examine their content. Results from Phase 2 of the study, which was designed to elicit the content-related cognitive constructs relevant to capturing entrepreneurial vision, revealed that the frequency of "external" constructs generated during the elicitation process was relatively similar to the frequency of occurrence of "internal" constructs. A construct was defined as external if it referred to a firm's products or markets. "Clear-cut niche" versus "broad customer base" constituted an external (bipolar) construct, for example, as "clear-cut niche" is a reference to the firm's market breadth. In contrast, an internal construct was defined as one that referred to the firm's organizational characteristics (e.g., size, finance, structure, control). "Much bigger" versus "much smaller" was classified as an internal construct because it addressed the issue of organization size. Of the 158 individual constructs elicited during Phase 2, 75 were external in nature, 81 were internal, and 2 could not be classified within the "internal/external" framework. These results lend support to Filion's findings concerning the nature of entrepreneurial vision (1990, 1991), which were arrived at using a divergent methodology. Filion found that for some entrepreneurs the internal factors tended to be more important, whereas for others external factors were emphasized; in nearly all cases, however, both components were present.

An additional means of examining the content of entrepreneurial vision is to consider the number of foci or elements addressed by the content—an issue of scope. Several conceptual frameworks have been proposed, with little consensus among authors evident (cf. Collins & Porras, 1991; Sashkin, 1986; Wilson, 1992). Results of Phase 2 of the study suggested that entrepreneurs employ a moderate number of cognitive constructs in thinking about and differentiating between firms as holistic entities. The average number of constructs elicited from a single entrepreneur was 13.2. Moreover, it was found that the total of 158 constructs elicited across the small but diverse sample could effectively be reduced to 12 underlying dimensions: (1) market breadth, (2) product innovation, (3) product scope, (4) geographic scope, (5) image, (6) customer relationship, (7) size, (8) employee recruitment and development, (9) organizational structure, (10) adaptability, (11) ownership/control, and (12) skill set. These 12 dimensions subsequently were shown during a validation process to be highly effective in capturing the salient elements of entrepreneurs' visions. Although a small number of unique constructs did emerge, nearly all were too firm-specific to allow comparisons to other firms. It is also notable that the underlying dimensions tended to represent well-known elements of strategic management, suggesting that there was considerable sharing and commonality amongst the constructs employed by entrepreneurs. Overall

the results supported those of Carriére (1989), who identified 10 strategic dimensions associated with the visions of 30 entrepreneurs in the Quebec sawmill sector.

Sooklal's theory indicates that values constitute the nucleus around which the leader's vision coalesces. In the case of entrepreneurship, a casual observer understandably might expect otherwise because the manifestation of an entrepreneur's vision is an economic entity. The examples of entrepreneurial vision described in the earlier section, however, were clearly value-laden and consistent with Sooklal's conjectures. The entrepreneurs associated with the turnaround situation, for example, spoke often of community and brotherhood and used the metaphor of "family" frequently when describing what they were trying to achieve. Their vision was much more about transforming individuals and social relationships than it was of wealth generation. If return on investment was important (it was never explicitly mentioned), it was so in a secondary fashion and because it constituted the means to an end rather than the end itself.

In the case of the startup of the professional practice, the core value embodied by the entrepreneur's vision was the potential for uncompromised service to improve the quality of life of others. Indeed, the business idea was itself an antithesis to the entrepreneur's prior workplace, where she had perceived that the emphasis on economic considerations present in that environment had forced her to compromise her values. Although sweeping generalizations cannot be made from these few observations, research over the years has provided consistent evidence that wealth generation is not the primary motivation of entrepreneurs. This stands in stark contrast to some convenience-based supporters of entrepreneurs such as venture capitalists, whose frank and unabashed economic motivations often come as a shock to entrepreneurs.

The Nature of Entrepreneurial Support Systems

Results from the pilot study revealed several differences both in the composition and the nature of utilization of support systems in mature versus entrepreneurial firm contexts. Mature firms in stable contexts usually named the entire management team and some professional advisors such as accountant, lawyer, and banker as being among their key supporters. This tendency resulted in larger support systems with a relatively high proportion of insiders. Notably, the support systems of mature firms also tended to be more geographically dispersed than those of new ventures, due in part to the former's ability to build external relationships over time through purchasing expeditions, attendance at industry trade shows, and so on. Another important factor, however, was that strategic information and advice of good quality were viewed as being more readily obtainable

from firms operating in the same industry but sufficiently distant so as not to pose a competitive threat.

Although most of the research comprising the study was cross-sectional in nature, Phase 3 did incorporate elements that allowed the examination of some longitudinal issues. In particular, we were interested in the extent to which the support system of an individual firm remained intact as the same firm experienced different contextual modes of operation (e.g., entrepreneurial vs. stable). In order to examine this issue, we interviewed those firms that had recently been engaged in circumstances substantially different from their current operating mode in both contexts, eliciting the names of the individual supporters separately for each situation. We found that there was frequently little overlap between the support systems of individual firms across operating contexts. For example, the supporters of one firm while engaged in a severe crisis threatening the survival of the firm consisted of six outsiders, none of whom appeared in the same firm's group of supporters after the crisis had been surmounted. Overall, the results suggested that the support systems of firms engaged in nonroutine activities are task-specific and temporary creations. Mayer (1966) termed such temporary social creations "action-sets." Using data concerning the electoral situation in the Dewas District in India to illustrate the concept, he described it as follows:

> One feature of this action-set is that a wide variety of bases for linkage are involved. Included as criteria are kinship, political party, religious sect, and so on. But the crucial point is that, whatever may be these "outward" bases for the links which together make up the path from the candidate to the voter, the "inward" content is always the same—namely political support of the candidate. Thus, action-sets of this kind are formed of links derived from many social fields; but because they are purposive creations by an ego, this purpose gives all the links a common feature...
>
> ...the action-set is a bounded entity. It is not a group, however. For the basis of membership is specific to each linkage, and there are no rights or obligations relating all those involved; even the common act of voting does not bring members into relation with each other. Moreover, the action-set could not exist without the ego around whom it is formed ... members are aware they form part of a population recruited for a particular common purpose, and they know that there are other linkages similar to theirs—though they may not be able to identify all the other people involved.
>
> Finally, the action-set is not a "permanent" entity like the group. ... This action-set thus exists only at ego's election. Any action-set constructed for a future election might contain a majority of the same people. But many of the linkages would have to be remade since ... they are based on specific transactions. (Mayer, 1966, pp. 304–306)

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Thus, action-sets are very much purposive rather than random, accidental or predetermined, and are characterized by shared intentionality. The creation and activation of an effective action-set can be seen to constitute core behaviors of entrepreneurship. Such an approach to support should provide for greater flexibility and more optimal configuration and specialization than a formalized and enduring support system such as a board of directors and may help to explain why past research has found boards of directors to be underutilized by small firms, despite the frequent testaments to their value that have appeared in textbooks.

The results of Phase 4 allowed a closer examination of the nature of support systems in an entrepreneurial context.[2] Here, the average support system consisted of 3.8 "key" supporters. Although the sample consisted of primarily small-scale startups (average firm size 3 years after incorporation was 5.2 employees), it was nevertheless striking that relatively few sets of supporter relationships were felt to be high in importance. The capability to effectively identify key potential relationships, therefore, appears to constitute a valuable entrepreneurial skill.

Key supporters tended to be male rather than female, but the sample of entrepreneurs was also predominantly male. By far the most frequent type of supporter relationship was family. Beyond the realm of family, supporter relationships tended to be quite diverse, including friends, government, suppliers, professional advisors, partners in other prior or existing ventures, indirect network contacts, suppliers, customers, and so on.

Overall, insiders comprised slightly less than 52% of all supporters, indicating a remarkable degree of balance between the proportions of outsiders and insiders. In contrast, value-based supporters tended to be substantially more common than convenience-based supporters, occurring roughly 40% more frequently. Together, these findings suggest that entrepreneurs are relatively successful in building value-based supportive relationships with outsiders. Because valuable resources and especially cash are often scarce and difficult to acquire during the process of launching a new venture, such a strategy constitutes a useful means of reducing costs while at the same time maximizing the resources available to the new firm. Nevertheless, a note of caution is in order. If Sooklal's theory is indeed correct and convenience-based and value-based supporters are of relatively equal importance in realizing a vision, then these findings suggest that the entrepreneurs in the study were operating at a suboptimal level. That is, likely in response to a shortage of capital, many entrepreneurs appear to be underutilizing convenience-based supporters. We defer further discussion of this problem to a later section in which we explore the consequences of supporter composition for both the strength of received support and subsequent firm performance.

The Nature of Entrepreneurial Support

We found in Phase 3 of the study that while firms engaged in routine activity had no trouble identifying their key supporters, their descriptions of support received tended to be quite general and somewhat vague, with support from outsiders usually consisting of information or advice. In contrast, firms in nonroutine contexts usually provided detailed examples of a rich variety of key support transactions and explained how the support was important to the development of the firm. In these instances, contacts with supporters tended to be purposeful and irregular rather than routine.

Overall, firms located in routine contexts appeared to rely on outsiders in their support systems for assistance in the task of environmental scanning and monitoring. Contacts tended to be routine and regular, with the primary purpose of maintaining the personal relationship. These relationships, over time, provided access to information concerning industry trends, new opportunities, threats, and so on, and were viewed by the interviewees as strategically important, but it is noteworthy that supporters were neither required nor expected to incur significant costs in providing this assistance; instead, the relationships tended to be reciprocal in nature, suggesting that these relationships tended to be more convenience-based than they were value-based. Supporters of entrepreneurial endeavors, on the other hand, often willingly incurred costs in order to assist the entrepreneur and also tended to provide more than one form of support, without an expectation of reciprocation or payback.

Phase 4 once again provided an opportunity to examine in greater detail the nature of support in entrepreneurial contexts. Key supporters provided a broad range of support, with intangible or "soft" support such as advice, serving as a sounding board and emotional support, appearing most frequently. On average, an individual supporter provided 3.3 different types of support. Tangible support such as financial assistance, while in constant demand, requires significant effort on the part of the entrepreneur to secure, and as both the time and effort available to the entrepreneur are not unlimited, these efforts are likely to be more focused. The findings are especially interesting in view of the insights they provide concerning the support valued by entrepreneurs during the start-up stage. Although the acquisition of financial and other "hard" assets is undeniably essential to firm startups, entrepreneurs appeared to require relatively massive amounts of intangible support in a broad variety of forms. In particular, the importance of emotional support appeared to feature prominently in the support strategies of entrepreneurs.

With the exception of advice, which appeared readily available from all types of supporters, the type of support provided by a supporter depended significantly on the nature of his/her relationship to the entrepreneur. Value-based supporters were more likely to serve as a sounding board and to

provide emotional support and extraordinary labor (at below market value). In contrast, convenience-based supporters were more likely to provide network referrals and "other," less common forms of support. Insiders were more likely to provide financial assistance, to serve as a sounding board, and to provide extraordinary labor. Outsiders provided greater access to strategic information and "other" rarer forms of support than did insiders.

The nature of the supporter relationship also possessed strong implications for the overall strength of the support received by the entrepreneur. Whereas prior research has tended to focus on the quantity of received support, we attempted to capture both the quantity and quality of support in our measures. In particular, social power (MacKinnon & Langford, 1994), as measured by occupational status, was utilized as a surrogate measure of support quality.

Insiders, particularly shareholders and employees, provided the greatest quantity of support compared to other groups of supporters. Value-based supporters also tended to provide more support than convenience-based supporters. Unsurprisingly, convenience-based supporters receiving a direct fee for service were associated with the lowest quantity of support.

Although insiders provided more support than outsiders, outsiders were associated with higher quality support. Similarly, convenience-based supporters were associated with higher quality support than value-based supporters. The social power of supporters tended to increase as one moved beyond the immediate vicinity of the entrepreneur, both geographically and in terms of social distance. As one moves beyond immediate family, friends, and employees to more distant relationships with suppliers, professional advisors, and bankers, one gains access to correspondingly superior resources.

Despite a heavy reliance on family and friends the entrepreneur's support system included a considerable proportion of more distant and more costly relationships. It appears, then, that minimizing costs is not the sole objective of the entrepreneur during the startup phase. In addition to minimizing risk exposure, entrepreneurs must also maximize the odds of survival, requiring that not only the quantity but also the quality of resources obtained be taken into account. Free but inappropriate advice, for example, could spell disaster for the firm. This challenge, moreover, is constrained by the amount of time, effort, and financial resources the entrepreneur has available. The findings suggest that maximizing the overall strength of support is a complex undertaking, involving fundamental tradeoffs between the quantity versus quality of received support and the efficiency versus effectiveness of potential support providers.

Assessing Impact: Does the Theory Make a Difference?

The main objective of Phase 4 was to test the propositions or hypotheses derived from Sooklal's model. In this section we discuss the results of these

tests with a focus on the nomological validity or explanatory power of the model. Nomological validity is assessed by examining the extent to which the predictions of the model are verified. We accomplished this by examining the amount of variance in each of the outcome variables that was accounted for by the variance in the associated predictor variables (Table 5.1, column 2). Given the parsimony of the model, its predictive power compares favorably to other empirical studies aimed at explaining new venture performance.

We also examined the extent to which the consideration of one additional variable, urban versus rural location, enhanced the predictive power of the theoretical model. Our model originally did not incorporate geographic location because a literature review did not reveal any theoretical or empirical grounds for including it; nevertheless, the literature was sufficiently controversial to warrant an examination of its potential impact. Table 5.1 (columns 3 and 4) summarizes the explanatory power of the model after taking into account firm location. With the exception of insider/outsider diversity in the case of rural firms, the ability to account for variation in the outcome variables is noticeably improved.

Despite possessing useful nomological validity, the findings suggest the research model, as a middle-range theory, is still underdeveloped in two regards. First, the low variance explained in the case of insider/outsider diversity is likely, at least partially attributable to the presence of only one predictor in the model. Second, although the analysis illustrates how the addition of location enhanced the power and "resolution" of the model, it does not explain why such changes should be expected to occur. Because the literature review revealed that prior knowledge was scant, attempts to refine the model would be highly speculative at present. Together, these shortcomings suggest a need for additional theory development through the further application of appropriate research techniques such as grounded theory.

Table 5.1. Comparison of Explanatory Power

	Variance Explained (Percent)		
Outcome Variable	*Total Sample*	*Urban Firms*	*Rural Firms*
Insider/outsider diversity	11.3	21.8	4.9
Support strength	48.2	55.4	62.6
Venture performance	21.6	24.4	27.4

In terms of the relative importance of predictor variables, value/convenience-based supporter diversity made the greatest contribution to both support strength and the overall model. It was mentioned earlier that

value-based supporters were more effective for providing support in greater quantities, whereas convenience-based supporters tended to provide higher quality support. The results indicate that assembling a maximally diverse combination of value- and convenience-based supporters is the single most important factor in maximizing the overall strength of received support.

Vision reach made the second strongest contribution to the overall model, followed by support strength. The importance of a far-reaching vision may stem from its potential to operate on support strength in a multifold manner, aiding the entrepreneur in the scripting process by increasing the salience of resource gaps and thus facilitating the identification and recruitment of appropriate supporters, and by providing supporters, once recruited, with increased motivation. The results also confirm the importance of support to the realization of the leader's vision, although the emphasis in this study has been on support in the form of resources rather than political influence.

Surprisingly, visions focusing on either internal or external issues were associated with greater supporter diversity than balanced visions placing equal emphasis on both internal and external aspects. Explaining this counterintuitive finding is not a simple task. It may be that early visions of entrepreneurs, which place equal emphasis on internal and external dimensions of the firm, are "spread too thinly" to provide sufficient motivational incentive for supporters. In the context of Sooklal's theory, the results point to the possibility that focused visions based on one or relatively few values may be more effective than broad-based visions incorporating a wide range of values. Clearly, this is an issue for further research.

Also contrary to expectations, both constructs reflecting supporter diversity had negative effects on performance. The disconfirming nature of these results is not without precedent, however (Hanlon, 2001). Interestingly, the performance of large firms similarly has been found to be enhanced by the greater relative presence of either inside or outside directors (Wagner, Stimper, & Fubara, 1998). Most explanations for the existence of a homogeneity effect attribute the benefits of homogeneity to improved communication, cohesion and consensus (Wagner et al., 1998); each of these factors can be seen to be associated with the implementation process. Taken together, these results reinforce the surprisingly complex nature of diversity and suggest that while diversity may contribute positively to support strength, it may at the same time make implementation of the vision more difficult.

Study Limitations

Several limitations associated with the study suggest a need for caution when interpreting the findings. First, an assumption of this study was that a supporter's social power (measured by occupational status) provides a useful indication of support quality. Although prior research suggests that this assumption is likely reasonable (MacKinnon & Langford, 1994), the current indicator provides at best only one measure of a multidimensional and complex construct. A second limitation surrounds the small sample size and its associated low statistical power. Despite this weakness, the study demonstrated considerable effectiveness. A third limitation stems from a reliance on retrospective recall; the potential for serious threats here, however, were reduced through a focus on key supporters rather than all individuals who provided support. Fourth, neither the statistical technique nor the cross-sectional design of the study supports claims of causation. Finally, Newfoundland possesses some distinctive features in terms of its geography, culture, and economy, which make it difficult to assess the extent to which the study findings are generalizable to other geographic settings.

CONCLUSION

In this section we both summarize and reflect on the significance of what we have attempted. We have found it convenient to divide the summary into two sections: "Contributions to Theory" and "Implications for Practice"—and will integrate our reflections into these sections. Before doing so, however, a few comments on grounded theorizing seem to be appropriate.

As researchers, most of what we do assume the form of a clear statement of hypotheses and the empirical testing of these hypotheses, with sampling, research design, and quantitative reasoning being important instrumentalities. In this context an articulation of the essence of the scientific method and its many instrumentalities becomes unnecessary because we rightly assume that they are the implicit foundation of all that we do. Grounded research theorizing does not seem to enjoy this status. Hence, we had to articulate and extend the essentials of Glaser and Strauss's work before using them. Here, we should bear in mind that Glaser and Strauss first published their work in 1967, well before many commonplace quantitative techniques were developed. Yet grounded research theorizing does not seem to command the recognition and legitimacy accorded to quantitative techniques. Additionally, there appears to be an unfortunate "divide" separating those who use grounded research to generate theory from those of us who test theories. We view both of these streams of scientific investiga-

tion to be complementary and have implicitly sought to demonstrate the nature of the partnership involved.

Without meaning to repeat our summary of grounded research theorizing, we wish to underscore the importance of recognizing the choices in levels of abstraction involved. Case writing, we submit, is part of a theorizing continuum that starts at the micro level. Mid-range, macro-level theorizing and empirical testing are more recognized parts of this same continuum that aims at creating knowledge in the social sciences. Apart from the obvious research considerations involved, a conscious awareness of the existence of this continuum has some important strategic considerations. For example, universities that have used the "case method" often have done so without recognizing, we suggest, that the case method is but a part of this family of research activity that includes the creation of both mid-range and macro theories. Had this been so, the very valuable contribution that these institutions have made to case writing and classroom learning would have been evident in the generation and testing of a greater volume and variety of insightful mid-range and macro-level theories at the post-graduate level.

Combining these approaches to theorization usually creates unexpected synergies. Without belaboring this well-recognized truth, we share one such personal insight that arose from the partnership involved in writing this chapter. Sooklal did the early writing of his 1991 paper during a sabbatical year at the Manchester Business School. Professor Tom Lupton reviewed the first draft. At the end of a very encouraging review he asked: "Where do leadership visions come from?" It was a question that Sooklal could only answer, more than 10 years later, after looking at Hanlon's work. Values arise from the culture within which the leader exists. Individuals embrace these values with varying degrees of intensity. Simultaneously, problems arise within the social environment. Only a very few individuals have the opportunity—some are given it and others, like entrepreneurs, must grasp it—to play a lead role in solving these problems that are recognized in the larger environment. Leadership visions arise from this marriage of values with opportunity.

With these prefatory observations on grounded research and collaborative and mixed-method theorizing, we now summarize the contributions and implications of our work.

Contributions to Theory

The contributions that the material presented in this chapter makes to theory are threefold: the first relates to the "reach" of the theory, the second relates to its structure, and the third relates to the "granular" nature of the

validation, which arose within an entrepreneurial milieu. In doing grounded research one has to make some conscious decisions that flow from the reach of the theory that he or she is attempting to produce. Sooklal had, for example, could have written a case study on the experience of his subject. He could also have written a mid-range theory about change within public-sector organizations. He chose instead to create a general theory of leadership that could be subject to subsequent testing at the micro and mid-range levels across a variety of situations beyond management and business administration. For example, the leadership model remains open to experiential corroboration or refutation by retired leaders of political parties at the supranational, national, and state or provincial levels of government. Investigations of path-breaking visionary leadership in the pure and applied sciences, in literature, and in protest movements (i.e., social entrepreneurship), can be feasibly undertaken starting with the theoretical framework presented by Sooklal. Here, Hanlon's experience with his pilot study should be kept in mind.

In Hanlon's pilot phase, Sooklal's model was largely "rejected" when examined within the context of stable ventures. Here, what were at stake were issues like increasing market share, plant expansion, and other aspects of controlled, incremental growth. We submit that what was being observed was management rather than leadership. As Hanlon went on to examine the experiences of entrepreneurs *before* they had succeeded in establishing themselves, Sooklal's leadership model was acceptably validated. For stable companies, the issue in question seems to be management rather than leadership. Here, investigations in line with Mintzberg's investigative approach would be appropriate; we could learn much about the nature of managerial work by looking at the actual behavior of managers in real time. Put differently, management is essentially a state of being.

Leadership, on the other hand, is essentially a state of becoming. To attempt to study the behavior of a leader after he has realized his or her vision is in some ways similar to locking the barn door after the horses have bolted! Yet retrospective recall, with all its imperfections, remains the main investigative option because one does not set out to become a leader. One sets out to accomplish a "mighty" task and only after one has succeeded does he or she become recognized as a leader. Having succeeded as a leader, a more stable phase of value-based management commences. Here it should be noted that value-based management arises from a visionary antecedent. In the absence of this visionary antecedent, what one observes using Mintzberg's approach is convenience-based management. We suggest that some of the confusion that currently exists in the area of leadership theory may very well have its origins in research design (looking at executive behavior at the post-establishment stage), in the undifferentiated

treatment of value- and convenience-based management, and in the treatment of managers as leaders.

Some final observations on the complementary differences that exist between macro and mid-range theories are perhaps in order. Absent from Sooklal's macro level abstraction on the nature of vision was the granularity of the very same construct that was examined from a mid-range perspective by Hanlon. Hanlon's notion of vision included such discriminants as complexity, reach, and balance. Likewise, his examination of the support system looked at such notions as diversity and strength of support. None of these somewhat "granular" constructs could possibly have emerged from a macro perspective. Some of these may very well be specific to entrepreneurship. And herein lies the complementary strength of a macro-level perspective: it aims to provide a structure or framework that is sufficiently inclusive to embrace efforts to identify, distinguish and explain common relationships that are preserved across the various manifestations of the leadership phenomenon. Here we should not lose sight of the symbiotic relationship that is inherent in collaborative methods. For example, the observed distinction between leadership and management that arose from a mid-range interpretation of data is sufficiently persuasive to be included in a macro-level theory of leadership.

We conclude our sojourn into the study of leadership with a reminder that what we have attempted to do is but a part of a larger process. Providing timely assistance to people who are in the process of becoming leaders is an important dimension of our research. To do this it is necessary to enter into the Spartan realm of pure theory and the collegial scrutiny that it entails. This is a process that does not lend itself to a neat conclusion. We believe that the time is right for us to include informed practitioners as active partners in the process of enquiry and validation. This chapter is but a precursor to this larger task that lies ahead.

NOTES

1. Financial support for this study, provided by the Institute for Social and Economic Research, Memorial University of Newfoundland, is gratefully acknowledged.

2. These results and Phase 4 results concerning the nature of entrepreneurial support are described in greater detail in Hanlon and Saunders (2001).

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CHAPTER 6

BUILDING THEORY IN LEADERSHIP THROUGH ELECTRONIC NETWORKING

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ABSTRACT

This chapter reports on a 3-year research project conducted in Australia, which investigated the challenges and ethical dilemmas faced by leaders in four frontline human service organizations. The study incorporated four complementary data collection stages, namely, questionnaire, interviews, critical leadership incident, and an interactive website, which is the main topic of this chapter. This customized, interactive website involved a number of leaders in a cutting-edge discussion and analysis on leadership issues and concepts emerging from preceding data. Specialist features of the website included: *key discussion themes* on leadership; *hot topics* emerging from these discussions; a *voting facility* to indicate opinion trends; and *a series of daily satirical cartoons,* specially designed from the emerging analysis of the data to attract participants to log on each day. A research moderator "managed" the website in order to maximize the engagement of participants and, in conjunction with the research team, helped "test" and validate emerging leadership concepts.

INTRODUCTION

Many leaders and managers have felt the pressures arising from economic rationalism and managerialism over the last two decades. The pressures and the consequences have been debated frequently in the media and in academic circles. Arising from these concerns, a leadership forum hosted by Australian Catholic University (ACU) was convened in November 1996 to test whether the pressure "to do more with less" was widespread and warranted further investigation in systematic ways. The forum was followed by further discussion among representatives of a number of participating organizations to explore common problems and issues.

These initial conversations focused on the Karpin Report's (1995) call for better leadership (as opposed to competent management) in Australian Industry and consideration of the implications for frontline human service organizations, such as education, health, and the police service. Discussions revealed that many frontline managers were under pressure to respond to environmental, system, and organizational challenges by adopting "hard" managerialist approaches and techniques to the exclusion of "softer" leadership or people-centered approaches. It became clear that, despite the emphasis on the need for effective leadership in Australian frontline human service organizations, there was a dearth of empirical research concerning contemporary challenges and responses related to these challenges.

Representatives at these discussions from across the industry sectors included a range of health, education, business, and other human service organizations. The discovery of common issues and interests fostered ongoing conversations among these industry groups and eventually led to the development of a pilot study, which was undertaken between July and October 1997. By this stage, industry partners were emerging and in time those partners, together with Australian Catholic University, formed the Service Organisations Leadership Research (SOLR) Project[1] to investigate the challenges and ethical dilemmas faced by leaders in a selection of frontline human service organizations as well as the ways these leaders responded to workplace pressures. The Project was funded by four industry partners and the Australian Research Council through the Department of Education, Training, and Youth Affairs' Strategic Partnerships with Industry—Research and Training Scheme (SPIRT). The funds for the Project covered the 3-year period from 1999 to 2001.

THE SOLR PROJECT

During the period of the conversations among representatives of the organizations from the leadership forum in late 1996 until the end of 1997, a partnership gradually emerged between the participants, who were:

- Australian Catholic University
- NSW Police Service
- NSW Department of Education and Training
- Catholic Education Office, Parramatta
- Australian Conference of Leaders of Religious Institutes (ACLRI)

The original development of the formal proposal for the study was undertaken as a close collaborative venture among the partners, all of whom were intimately involved in the development of the research questions and in the selection of methodology and research methods and techniques. The significant practitioner knowledge and expertise of the organizational representatives facilitated the development and implementation of the entire project. Their participation was as "coresearchers" in every phase.

In the development stages of the Project, the partner organizations, through their coresearchers, formulated the initial research questions by drawing on their combined expertise, experience, and insight into the challenges and issues that were perceived to be part of daily organizational life. A rigorous, iterative process resulted in the following major research questions being proposed:

1. What are the contemporary challenges for leaders in frontline human service organizations?
2. How are leaders responding to these challenges?
3. What are the ethical dilemmas and underlying values involved in making these responses?
4. How are these challenges impacting on contemporary leadership practice?
5. How can industry partners use the findings to improve leadership training and development in their organizations?

The SOLR project focused on the long-term development of organizational capabilities rather than short-term management needs. The turbulence of the Australian context was one of the stimuli for this leadership research that emanated from the original leadership forum in November 1996. The forces that contributed to the complexity of modern organizational environments include: expanding volumes of information; global competition; the effect of technology on structure and internal processes

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of organizations; the increasing impact of economic rationalist philosophy and practices; corporatization and privatization of service organiszations; and the rising consciousness in society of ethical, social justice, and social responsibility issues.

Environmental complexities and turbulence have brought to the forefront fundamental issues and tensions related to leadership and management, organizational culture and structures, and management practices. In an extensive review of the literature on Western leadership theory, research, and practice, Bass and Stogdill (1990) concluded that leadership made "the critical difference" in the success of organizations across the whole spectrum of life—education, church, business, military, politics, and government. The Karpin Report (1995) titled, *Enterprising Nation: Renewing Australia's Managers to Meet the Challenge of the Asia Pacific Century,* encouraged increasing links between business, industry, and education in order to promote a climate of excellence and, especially, to improve the quality of leaders and managers in Australian organizations.

A survey conducted by Little (1997, pp. 1–2) of 119 leaders of Australia's top companies reported an increasing frustration with "desperational change" driven by global and national economic, technological, and other change forces, leaving little room for "aspirational change." A clear theme emerging from these results was that successful change in an organization has more to do with "emphasizing the role of managers as 'leaders'" and modeling by leaders, than with reorganization and reengineering.

Leaders and managers in frontline human service organizations are being challenged by external and internal forces as never before. These challenges have placed leadership, its basis, function, and effects, in the public consciousness. There is a reexamination of the concept of power and authority and how they are exercised and legitimized in organizational relationships. In recent years, there has been a noticeable centering on leader–follower dynamics. In this view, those who are lead bestow leadership on the leader and, therefore, it must be earned (Cox & Hoover, 1992). In addition, leaders are expected to increasingly comply with ethical and moral standards in their relationships and practices (Duignan & Bhindi, 1997; Starratt, 1993, Taylor, 1991; Terry, 1993). Many managers in frontline service organizations face increasingly demanding and sometimes hostile clientele, leading them to adopt knee-jerk responses to confusing and ethically charged crises. Often these managers experience frustration and feel they are misunderstood.

A major paradigm shift seems to be occurring in the way our world, work, relationships, and leadership are construed (Gunn, 1996; Parry, 1996; Suzuki, 1997). The current emphasis on corporate managerialism, the tendencies toward leadership expediency (Kets de Vries, 1993), the competition to gain personal advantage, and the sometimes abuse of

power have contributed to a persistent feeling among many followers of being used, devalued, cheated, even demeaned. This, in turn, can have a detrimental effect on organizational performance. This perception of "excessive managerialism" has led to the call for the transformation of managers and administrators into leaders who focus on the "soft" issues related to culture and people (Little, 1997).

At the heart of these issues is a concern for values and ethics (Karpin, 1995; Ryan, 1997). This has led to a concern for "the paralysis of moral patterns" of life (Pirsig, 1992, p. 357) and a great yearning to reclaim the moral, ethical, and spiritual domains of leadership (Duignan & Bhindi, 1997; Conger and Associates, 1994; Covey, 1992; Duignan, 1997; Handy, 1997; Sergiovanni, 1992).

It was in the context of these concerns that the SOLR project was conceived and implemented. The coresearchers from the partner organizations were keen to be actively involved in a research project that focused on contemporary issues in leadership. Such a complex study required a methodology and methods that would be comprehensive in scope yet sufficiently focused and integrated to generate a coherent view of contemporary leadership challenges, dilemmas, and practices.

AN INTEGRATED METHODOLOGY

Leadership involves complex influencing processes within dynamic organizational contexts. In order to study both the vertical and horizontal dimensions of the research questions on leadership, it was decided to include leaders from executive, middle and frontline levels across the four different organizations involved in the study. It was also decided to use a range of data collection techniques within both the quantitative and qualitative research traditions to assist in capturing both the generic aspects and the variability of leadership.

Parry (1998), when reflecting on the variability of the social influencing processes of leadership, recommended that:

> Leadership research must incorporate the variety of variables that impact upon the social influence process. Hence, a methodology must be used which will utilize a breadth and depth of data such that the variety and range of variables are incorporated. (p. 85–86)

A combination of quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis techniques were employed in a complementary fashion (Hede & Wear, 1993) in the study. A greater emphasis, however, on qualitative approaches reflected Parry's (1996) recommendations from his review of leadership

research in Australia and New Zealand. He favored qualitative, processual research methods using grounded theory approaches to obtain a fuller understanding of the processes of leadership in order to "generate more explanatory theories than mainstream leadership literature has achieved" (p. 170).

Incorporated within the study were four complementary data collection stages, namely, questionnaire, interviews, critical leadership incident, and electronic dialogue on an interactive website. While a brief overview of each stage is provided, the emphasis in this chapter is on the fourth stage, the electronic dialogue and its role in building leadership theory.

Questionnaire

The questionnaire was developed to "map" the research area. It was designed to explore the main dimensions of the research questions with a stratified sample of frontline, middle, and senior/executive leaders. The questionnaire, using a 6-point Likert scale, was piloted and revised accordingly. About 3,000 questionnaires were distributed through the Industry Partner organisations with a 42% response rate. The findings from the questionnaire were used to identify key concepts related to the research questions and also to help formulate the questions for the interviews. Included in the questionnaire was an invitation to participants to be involved in subsequent stages of the research. Over 500 respondents indicated their preparedness to continue their involvement with the SOLR Project.

Interview

Interviews were conducted with a stratified selection of leaders who had volunteered to be interviewed. The interview questions were developed and piloted with a small number of key personnel within the Industry Partners. In order to ensure consistency in the interviewing process, all interviewers attended a training day. Regular contact was kept with the interviewers in order to discuss any possible emerging methodological or interviewer problems. Interviews were generally 30 minutes in length, were semi-structured, and were undertaken either face-to-face or by telephone. Over 100 interviews were conducted and transcribed.

Critical Incident Technique

About 300 participants indicated their willingness to complete a Critical Leadership Incident (CLI). This CIT used a modification of Cormack's (1984) approach. Critical incidents can capture some of the dynamics of leadership choices and dilemmas and are a "catalyst for examining leadership processes" (Parry, 1998, p. 96). Participants in the CIT were asked to describe one incident where they, as leaders, were forced to make a difficult ethical choice. They were asked to briefly recount what happened, the dynamics and processes involved, the choices they made, and the lessons learned. The recounting was guided by six stimulus questions, which were piloted and refined. About 155 Critical Incident Surveys were returned.

Interactive Website

The details of the interactive website are discussed in a later section as it is central to the topic of this chapter. Prior to that discussion, another key feature of the research approach is presented, namely, the involvement of the leader practitioners who participated in the research as coresearchers.

PARTICIPANTS AS CORESEARCHERS

Schon (1983, p. 308) noted the "disturbing tendency for research and practice to follow divergent paths." He argued that researchers and practitioners tend, increasingly, to live in separate worlds and have little of relevance to say to one another. He suggested that practitioners who find that existing theories do not apply to turbulent and uncertain environments should become actively engaged as reflective researchers themselves. In this form of research, which Schon labels "reflective research," both the practitioner and researcher

> enter into modes of collaboration very different from the forms of exchange envisaged under the model of applied science. The practitioner does not function here as a mere user of the researcher's product. . . [but] reveals to the reflective researcher the ways of thinking that he [*sic*] brings to his practice, and draws on reflective research as an aid to his own reflection-in-action. Moreover, the reflective researcher cannot maintain distance from, much less superiority to, the experience of practice . . . [but] must somehow gain an inside view of the experience of practice. Reflective research requires *a partnership of practitioner-researchers and researcher-practitioners.* (p. 305, emphasis added)

The closer the relationship between the researcher and practitioner, the lower the burden of interpretation placed on the shoulders of the researcher. This is an important consideration in building grounded theory where, often, the expectations for the theoretical sensitivity of the researcher are onerous. A partnership with reflective practitioners can enhance theoretical sensitivity in relation to emerging data and concepts and should improve the fit, relevance and workability of the theory in the real world.

There are also benefits for the practitioner in this partnership because, as Schon (1983) pointed out, practitioners are not always the best ones to describe their theories-in-use or theories-in-action:

> When practitioners reflect-in-action, they describe their own intuitive understandings. . . [but] there is always a gap between such descriptions and the reality to which they refer. . . . [Their] intuitive knowing is always richer in information than any description of it. Further, the internal strategy of representation, embodied in the practitioner's feel for artistic performance, is frequently incongruent with the strategies used to construct external constructions of it. Because of this incongruity, for example, people who do things well often give what appear to be good descriptions of their procedures which others cannot follow. Everyone who has tried to learn from a book how to ski or write a story knows how difficult it can be to act from such a description. (p. 276)

The conceptualization of professional practice (e.g., leadership) into a theoretical framework is enhanced if the relationship between researcher and practitioner is recast in order to combine the skills and expertise of both parties. This new relationship we refer to as "symbiotic interaction" where both parties work in partnership using their respective knowledge and skills to help build reflective theory in leadership.

The interactive website can be a useful tool for engaging researchers and leader practitioners in such "symbiotic interaction." Through a number of online interactive processes (refer to description of website), practitioners can be challenged to examine the way in which they frame and interpret their leadership experiences. They can be urged by the researchers to reflect critically on and interrogate their taken-for-granted assumptions and their theories-in-action.

The need for practitioners to regularly question their assumptions about the way they act and their purpose for acting is strongly advocated by Argyris (1982), Argyris and Schon (1978) and Schon (1983) as part of a process of learning and improvement of their practice. Such critical reflection can lead to a reinterpretation of meanings related to practice, to an examination of the internal and external coherence of their theories-in-

action, and a possible reframing of their own intuitive ways of knowing of what constitutes "exemplary practice" (Duignan, 1998).

The researchers are also challenged to be critically reflective as their conceptual constructions are "tested on the ground" by the practitioners' intuitive knowing and their intimate understanding of what will and will not work in practice (relevance and workability of theory). Through this "critically collaborative research process" (Anderson, 1990), researchers quickly discern that practitioners usually have highly developed and sophisticated theoretical frames that should not be dismissed lightly as pragmatism or explained away as received wisdom or "learned experience." The symbiotic interaction between the researchers and practitioners helps cure the researchers of any intellectual arrogance, of flights into abstraction, or of too lofty theorizing (Duignan & Macpherson 1993). Practitioners quickly "ground" them in everyday realities and help the researchers identify touchstones between theory and practice.

Duignan and Macpherson (1993) reported on the creative, symbiotic interaction that occurred in a collaborative research process between researchers (theorists) and practitioners:

> The theorists were generally reluctant to consider the implications of their ideas for the pragmatic challenges of leadership . . . and practitioners were often reluctant to make radical analyses of current leadership dilemmas. Exemplary practitioners had to learn effective ways of challenging theorists' basic assumptions. Theorists had to learn to come to terms with the ability of practitioners to theorize. (p. 16)

A variety of techniques were used in the SOLR project to develop and maintain symbiotic interaction between researchers and practitioners as coresearchers. These included:

- From the start of the project leader practitioners were invited and encouraged to participate in all phases of the project;
- Representatives of the research partner organizations were continuously involved as members of the research team and gave the project a high profile and credibility within their organizations;
- Members of the research team were invited to speak at gatherings of the leaders involved in the project;
- Leaders in the organizations were encouraged to contact the research team by telephone and/or email and many took the opportunity to do so;
- A customized, welcoming postcard was circulated to invite participation in the website; and
- The interactive website itself was designed to create a welcoming and friendly atmosphere to encourage participation and dialogue.

THE INTERACTIVE WEBSITE

About 535 respondents who indicated their interest in the SOLR project in the questionnaire phase were invited by letter and email to join a 3-week, online research dialogue on leadership. In the week prior to the commencement of the conversation, prospective participants received a postcard advertising the site address, welcoming them to the site, encouraging them to participate substantially and frequently, and providing them with their group identifier that gave them anonymity as individuals.

Each of the partner groups was issued with a group identifier to access the site. They were assured they would only be identified by their group ID (i.e., NSWPS, DET, CEOP, ACLRI) unless they chose to identify themselves in the discussion. Many respondents chose to identify themselves by a first name or initials. This gave the conversation a more personal atmosphere and respondents were able to adopt a more familiar tone when responding to different topics.

Respondents were asked to log on regularly in order to keep abreast of all new developments and to be part of the ongoing debate, analysis, and critique on emerging leadership issues. They were advised that there was no set length for the contributions, but that short and to-the-point contributions were highly valued. This was to encourage those leader practitioners who were not used to presenting their views in written form to participate and contribute. They were also asked to be as spontaneous as possible and "tell it like it is," and to comment freely on the contributions of others, given that constructive criticism is a useful research tool.

In order to keep the website prominent to participants' daily commitments, a "research moderator" managed the interactions. The research moderator sent out regular reminders about the site and the topics under discussion. At the conclusion of the website dialogue, many respondents, in their evaluative comments, thanked the moderator for the regular reminders they received.

The role of the moderator was integral to the success of the website. This person (it is recommended that one person should moderate throughout), worked closely with the research team, had creative input into its design and layout, and played a central role in testing and refining the site. Prior to the site going "live," it was piloted by our coresearchers from each of the organizations involved in the project. During this period, the moderator was in constant contact with the site designers and those piloting the site. This was a vital step, as the moderator needed to be totally conversant with all the site features.

Features of the Site

The site had a number of specialized features designed to create a friendly atmosphere for frank and frequent dialogue. There was a special welcome message provided in two versions. First-time visitors to the site received a general introduction to the site. After approximately 20 minutes this would 'refresh' to the welcome message that was updated early each morning. This welcome message drew the readers' attention to different features of the site and highlighted areas of the leadership research (threads, themes, emerging concepts) that they might wish to discuss. In addition, representatives from each of the organizations in the research were featured as "guest" writers in the welcome section in order to better contextualize the website.

A series of satirical cartoons on leaders and leadership was created especially for the project by our resident cartoonist to encourage participation in the dialogue. These were refreshed daily by the moderator and stored in an archive so that they could be viewed throughout the 3-week period. The cartoons were created to reflect the nature of the prevailing discussion and the emerging concepts. While they were very clever and humorous, they also acted as a stimulus and catalyst for the dialogue. Many participants commented on the usefulness of the cartoons in helping them engage with the dialogue. Some said that they logged in regularly just to check out the cartoons and then they stayed on to engage in the dialogue.

Participants in the website were also invited to "Take a Vote." Voting topics were derived from the leadership research dialogue on the website and took the form of a 6-point scale ranging from *strongly disagree* to *strongly agree*. Participants were able to vote only once on any topic and, after completing their voting, were given the option of viewing the results in a graphical form in a voting archive.

The moderator previewed all postings to the site and was responsible for approving or editing all contributions. This was to protect the site from frivolous comment or outside intervention. The website designers created the site so that as soon as a posting was made to the site, the moderator was notified by an email. In order to encourage participation, the moderator endeavored to approve the contribution as soon as possible after the posting. The site had a "contact us" section, which allowed respondents to contact the moderator directly. Where respondents had trouble accessing the site, they either contacted the moderator through the "contact us" feature or by phone. Therefore, the moderator and research team remained in contact with the coresearchers through email and phone so as to encourage participation and act as a troubleshooter.

This moderated website was live for 3 weeks and was designed to focus on "discussion topics" identified from the findings of the questionnaire,

critical incident technique, interviews, and emerging data on the website. Examples of discussion topics included risk taking, expectations of leaders, "lopping off dead wood," and fear in organizations. Each of these topics attracted considerable discussion. Two "hot topics," which were linked to a main discussion topic, were featured at any one time. For example, a hot topic derived from "Lopping Off Dead Wood" was "Getting Rid of People." These hot topics were used as a form of "theoretical sampling" to help direct the focus and direction of the emerging theory.

THEORETICAL SAMPLING

Through the use of the constant comparative method (Glaser, 1978, 1998, 2001; Strauss & Corbin, 1990, 1997), the researchers and coresearchers began to identify a pattern of related concepts (categories with their constituent properties) that seemed to be shaping an emerging theory. Again, it is preferable for both researchers and reflective practitioners to collaborate in determining which concepts have "proven theoretical relevance" (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, p. 177) and are "significant because they are repeatedly present or notably absent when comparing incident after incident, and are of sufficient importance to be given the status of categories."

While the researchers have the primary responsibility for coding, interpretation and initial category formation, leaders selected as coresearchers from different levels of organizations (executive, middle, frontline) and from different organizations (education, police, religious) can play an informative and influential role in helping "test" these concepts and categories to help validate their *fit* with the real world, *relevance* to the people involved, *workability* across a range of different contexts, and whether or not they are readily *modifiable* to adjust to rapidly changing environments (Glaser & Strauss, 1967).

In this critically collaborative process, researchers and practitioners together influenced the choices in theoretical sampling and helped shape the emerging theory.

The interactive website with its facilities for simultaneous analysis and feedback; voting on the importance, significance, and priority of ideas and concepts; creation of new strands (concepts, categories) by both researchers and practitioners; and the identification of "hot topics" emerging from the data, proved to be a very useful research tool in theoretical sampling and in enhancing theoretical sensitivity.

ENHANCING THEORETICAL SENSITIVITY

Theoretical sensitivity refers, primarily, to the researcher's ability through relevant prior experience and familiarity with related literature (Strauss & Corbin, 1990) to recognize what is important in data and give these meaning through the generation of constructs and theoretical formulations. Such sensitivity can, however, be honed through the "symbiotic interaction" of researchers and practitioners during the research process. While knowledge of the literature and relevant professional experience provide researchers with useful frameworks to assist in the interpretation of the data and to improve theoretical sensitivity, Strauss and Corbin (1990, p. 43) argued that "the analytic process itself provides an additional source for theoretical sensitivity." They added that the researcher's insights and understandings of phenomena increase as he or she interacts with the data:

> Often one idea or insight sparks another, directing you to look more closely at the data, to give meaning to words that seemed previously not to have meaning, and to look for situations that might explain what is happening here. This increasing sensitivity to concepts, their meanings, and relationships is why it is so important to interweave data selection with data analysis. Each feeds into the other thereby increasing insight and recognition of the parameters of the evolving theory.

While Glaser (1998) and Strauss and Corbin (1990) emphasized the importance of relevant experience, familiarity with related literature, and the need for continual interaction with the data as three cornerstones for the researcher's theoretical sensitivity, they ignore a fourth important one—the role that experienced practitioners, such as leaders, can play in a critically collaborative research process to help "separate the pertinent from that which isn't" (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, p. 42). Parry (1998, p. 94) supported this view when he suggested that researchers of leadership as an influencing process should endeavor to explore "the implicit theories of participants" in order to determine the possible impact of these theories upon their interpretation of reality. The researcher does not need to "stand alone" as the arbiter and sole interpreter of data. In leadership research using qualitative approaches, researchers are often encouraged to "let the data speak for themselves." The aim should be to "let the leaders as coresearchers speak for themselves" and become collaboratively involved in the construction of meaning and in framing and reframing theoretical propositions about their leadership processes and practices.

Partington (2000) agrees with and expands this argument when he advocates an approach to management research, which he referred to as "mode 2 research." Drawing on the work of Gibbons and colleagues (1994, cited in Partington, 2000), he proposed that "the mode 2 knowledge-production

system brings together the 'supply side' of knowledge [mostly university researchers] with the 'demand side'" [leaders/managers]. He added:

> Working together in a mutually transdisciplinary frame, academics and managers attempt to learn from one another in a virtuous cycle of understanding, explication and action. Academics learn from managers, processing deeds and words into normative benchmarks and blueprints for management practice. In parallel, managers learn from academics, developing and applying practically derived theories. (p. 91)

In such a symbiotic relationship, theoretical sensitivity can be improved and the theory–practice gap minimized.

The interactive website helped the researchers not only engage with the leaders in the various organizations in discussions on the content and processes of leadership but, also, on meanings, conceptual clarity, and emerging theoretical propositions. The NVivo computer software program proved to be a very useful resource in helping generate these propositions.

NVIVO: A THEORY BUILDING TOOL

NVivo, a computer analysis software package primarily for qualitative data (see Richards, 1999), was used to assist with the analysis of the large volume of qualitative data generated by the interviews, critical incident technique, and interactive website. It proved to be a powerful integrating tool that greatly assisted in the generation of concepts and theoretical propositions from the data from the three leadership levels across the four organizations. It was especially useful for the organization and analysis of the data generated through the website.

All data from the website were downloaded daily using Access 2000 into a database that was subsequently imported as an online document into NVivo. Data generated through the website were, therefore, continually processed, analyzed, and presented back electronically to participants in the form of emerging themes and concepts. This iterative process helped ensure that the theories generated *fitted* with the real world, were *relevant* to the people involved in the research, *worked* across a range of contexts, and were readily *modifiable*.

Dialogue on the website was organized around "discussion threads." Each message posted to the website was also labeled in NVivo by groups (NSWPS, DET, CEOP, ACLRI), which identified each of the organizations participating in the research. Individual discussion threads were given a numerical identification generated by the website and, through coding and analysis, were arranged in nodes according to this ID. The nodes were combined to form a "conceptual tree" representing the patterns of rela-

tionships among concepts. This is an important part of the process of "making theory from the data" (Bazeley & Richards, 2000). They explain:

> Clarification of concepts is done in many ways, working with text coded at a node, naming and describing it. The process of building a web of ideas can involve linking to memos or text coded at a node, or to particular extracts of data. Category development can be done by focusing using searches, combining and using nodes and modeling, with layers representing the growing ideas. (p. 6)

The conceptual tree assisted, therefore, in the clarification of the interrelationships of emerging concepts and categories. It also facilitated the ready modification of theories—a central tenet of Glaser and Strauss's (1967) test of grounded theory.

The interweaving of data and theory was promoted by the memo function of NVivo. Richards (1999, p. 29) writes that NVivo radically removes the distinction between data and ideas, as memos are full status documents and, as they grow, "are themselves data, and can often be the most important of the data documents" (1999, p. 47).

An important feature of NVivo, within an integrated methodology, is that it allowed the data from the other three data-gathering phases—questionnaire, interview and critical leadership incident—to be linked with data generated by the website. The tools within NVivo include:

> Ways of assessing concepts, reviewing the performance of nodes and the node system, seeking and exploring associations and relationships, finding and validating patterns and above all, since this is usually the end point of qualitative research, returning to the data, for detailed understanding, insight, surprise and arrival.

NVivo's comprehensive structure, together with its great flexibility in the patterning of data and concepts, proved to be an invaluable aid in data organization, generation of concepts and categories, conceptual mapping, and theory development in the SOLR project.

STRENGTHS OF AN INTERACTIVE WEBSITE IN THEORY BUILDING

An interactive website is a cost efficient method of engaging a large number of research participants in an ongoing and iterative theory-building exercise. Its interactive nature helped redefine the relationship between the researcher and practitioner (co-researchers) to the benefit of both. It also enhanced the effectiveness of the process of theory building. The

interactions generated a rich, dense database. The electronic medium allowed coresearchers to voice their opinions, if they wished to do so, in an anonymous environment.

The development of grounded theory was not shaped solely by the perspectives of the individual researcher, but included analysis and interpretation of the data by the research team in conjunction with coresearchers as reflective practitioners. The website facilitated the symbiotic interaction between researcher and practitioner, which helped enhance the fit, relevance, and workability of an emerging theory as well as its modification for changing circumstances and conditions.

"Raw data" generated through the website were instantly readable and ready for analysis; there was no need for transcription. Data gathering and analysis occurred simultaneously and continuously through the multiple features of the website as well. The website had its own built-in triangulation of methods (narrative description, focused discussions, voting numerically, theoretical sampling around discussion threads or hot topics). Emerging theoretical propositions, concepts, or categories, as well as different points of view, were expressed and tested in a short period of time with a geographically diverse audience. Instantaneous and simultaneous discussion and dialogue was possible as well as speedy and continuous analysis and feedback, which facilitated an interactive approach to theory building.

An important advantage of the interactive website over a number of other methods was that data gathering was not restricted to set times. Contributors were able to access the website 24 hours a day and on weekends.

The site, once developed for research purposes, can be reused for other research activities with only modest modifications and cost. This is a considerable advantage in times of scarce resources, especially for research.

CONCLUDING COMMENTS

Leaders of contemporary frontline service organizations face numerous challenges and dilemmas. Responding effectively to such paradoxes and pressures involves complex and multidimensional influencing processes in changing environments. This chapter described a research project that collected data on leadership challenges, dilemmas, and responses over a 3-year period from leaders at executive, middle, and frontline across four different service organizations.

A study of such complexity required a comprehensive yet integrated methodology to distill meaning and generate concepts and theory that meet the requirements of fit, relevance, workability, and modification to reflect changing circumstances and conditions. This study used both quan-

titative and qualitative research approaches in a complementary way, combining questionnaires, interviews, critical incident techniques, and an interactive website in an integrated way. The computer research package, NVivo, proved to be a powerful tool in assisting in this integration and in the building of theory relevant to the research focus.

Leaders, as reflective practitioners/researchers, have their own theories of practice and should not just be regarded as passive respondents in research on leadership. In this chapter, a case is made for involving leaders as coresearchers who can and should have input into the development and implementation, including analysis and theory building, of research focusing on *their leadership.*

An interactive website proved to be a very valuable element of the integrated methodology used in this study. It is a cost-effective means of engaging a large number of leaders in a variety of geographically spread organizations in an interactive dialogue on leadership. Its potential for spontaneity, nonthreatening environment, speedy feedback, testing of concepts and categories, theoretical sampling, and enhancing theoretical sensitivity (if leaders are treated as coresearchers) was also discussed.

As researchers, we are currently refining this research site to test a leadership standards framework for school principals. We recommend this research tool as an added resource in helping generate greater insights and understandings of the complex influencing processes of leadership in contemporary organizations.

NOTE

1. The SOLR (Service Organisations Leadership Research) Project is a 3-year research project on the challenges for leaders in contemporary frontline human service organisations. This is an ARC DETYA-funded SPIRT Project involving Australian Catholic University, NSW Police Service, NSW Department of Education and Training, Catholic Education Office, Parramatta, and the Australian Conference of Leaders of Religious Institutes. Patrick Duignan is the Chief Investigator of the Project and members of the research team include: Anne Benjamin, Charles Burford, Elizabeth Cameron-Traub, Victoria Collins, Lyn Coulon, Mary Cresp, Tony d'Arbon, Michael Fagan, Jack Flanagan, Michael Gorman, Ron Ikin, Aengus Kavanagh, and Lynne Stallard.

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CHAPTER 7

TRIANGULATION IN ACTION

Integration of Qualitative and Quantitative Methods to Research Environmental Leadership

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ABSTRACT

Environmental leaders have a huge impact on critical environmental issues. We sought to learn about their values, leadership philosophies, and leadership-related challenges. We compared environmental leaders with leaders of other kinds of organizations, as well as comparing leaders of for-profit and nonprofit environmental organizations, using qualitative and quantitative research traditions.

In this chapter, we explain why and how we chose multiple research methods, and discuss the approaches and findings to illustrate how an open-ended approach enhanced our findings. Rather than viewing various research methods as part of an incompatible qualitative–quantitative dichotomy, we approached them as complementary modes of investigation, resulting in a

deeper understanding of the environmental leadership phenomenon. One of our challenges was determining how to analyze and integrate our data, since our method generated an unwieldy amount, and surfaced unexpected findings.

An equally important facet of our research was the interpersonal. One rewarding aspect was the rapport and empathy we developed with our respondents, which resulted in findings that would be immediately useful to practitioners, not simply to theoreticians. Ultimately, the success of our research depended on our own relationship. The project proved to be far more than an intellectual exercise, but involved the interaction of our emotions and personal values, as well as the social climate in which we conducted the study.

Quantitative and qualitative researchers have typically been critical of each other (Bryman, 1995; Guba & Lincoln, 1994; Stablein, 1996). Whereas quantitative research starts from the point of view of the researcher who develops research questions and hypotheses from his or her own perspective, qualitative research starts from the point of view of those being studied and generates propositions from the exploration of the ideas and experiences of those the researcher seeks to understand. Whereas the quantitative researcher is often characterized as the distant outsider who uses a structured research strategy to obtain statistical confirmation of theoretical predictions, the qualitative researcher is often characterized as the close insider who is reflexive and open to emerging theoretical concepts (Bryman, 1995; Mason, 1996). These underlying tensions between quantitative research (deductive positivism) and qualitative research (inductive interpretivism) suggest that there is a limited number of models for the successful integration of these methods.

Multimethod research based on the principle of triangulation has been identified as a means to enhance the validity of research findings when investigating complex and multifaceted phenomena (Bryman, 1995; Denzin, 1989; Jick, 1979; Mason, 1996; Miles & Huberman, 1984; Patton, 1990). Triangulation in research can take a variety of forms: data triangulation (variety of data sources); investigator triangulation (different researchers or evaluators); theoretical triangulation (multiple perspectives for analyzing and interpreting data); and methodological triangulation (multiple methods of data gathering and analysis) (Denzin, 1978). As observed by Bryman (1996, p. 288), "Quantitative and qualitative research are simply different approaches to the research process, and as such can be mutually informative and illuminating about an area like leadership, and can even be combined." Even so, leadership studies that have used multimethod or combined research approaches are relatively rare (Bryman, 1996; Kotter, 1982; Shamir, 1995). In this chapter, we tell the behind-the-scenes story of the challenges that we experienced in triangulating quantitative and qualitative research methodologies to study leadership in non-

profit and for-profit environmental organizations (Egri & Herman, 2000). In the end, we hope that this account demonstrates how integrating quantitative and qualitative research methods can result in synergistic outcomes that yield considerably more insights than either approach could alone.

GETTING STARTED

Our research project began with an interesting debate one afternoon in June 1994 at the close of an intense academic conference. Our debate revolved around two central questions: Is environmental leadership essentially different from other kinds of leadership? Are leaders of nonprofit environmental organizations different from leaders of for-profit environmental organizations? Each of us had studied and/or consulted with environmental organizations, and both of us could have debated these questions from either perspective, but for the sake of a congenial debate, we took opposing positions. The discussion was so interesting that we decided to pursue these questions in a joint research project. Since we lived in different countries, we decided to compare U.S. and Canadian leaders of for-profit and nonprofit environmental organizations and then compare our results to the literature on leadership in general.

We sensed that these kinds of comparisons would be useful for several reasons. First, environmental issues are increasingly more prominent in the decision-making agendas of public and private organizations within North American society (Egri & Pinfield, 1996; Porritt, 1984; World Commission on Environment and Development, 1987). Second, current societal and industrial practices have depleted and degraded the natural resources at unsustainable rates (Daly & Cobb, 1994; Hawken, 1993). And third, the burgeoning environmental movement is and will continue to be more influential in gathering public support for policy decisions that protect rather than degrade the environment (Sale, 1993; Snow, 1992). We believed that environmental leaders have had and will continue to have a huge impact on critical environmental issues such as biodiversity, clean air and water, sustainable resource use, and waste management. Thus, we eagerly sought to learn more about leaders at the forefront of environmental change, and in particular, their values and beliefs, leadership philosophies and skills, and personal challenges and problems. We wondered if leadership in environmental organizations required a unique set of characteristics or skills. We were curious as to who (demographically speaking) these environmental leaders were, and how they differed from other kinds of leaders in respect to their personal values and beliefs, their sense of environmental and social responsibilities, and leadership philosophies. We were curious about the everyday reality of leading in environmental orga-

nizations—the roles leaders played, the challenges they faced, and how they handled them. We were also interested in finding out whether organizations dedicated to ecological sustainability had developed unique forms and processes. While there is an extensive literature on leaders and leadership in other types of organizations (Bass, 1990), there have been very few empirical studies of the phenomenon of leadership and organizing to effect environmental change (Egri & Frost, 1994; Snow, 1992). We were keen to embark on this challenge.

In sum, we had a very preliminary research model with numerous research goals and objectives. In respect to leadership theory, our goal was to gather new empirical data concerning the phenomenon of leadership for environmental change, and to ascertain the degree to which environmental leadership is similar to or different from leadership in other contexts. In respect to leadership practice, we sought to identify the leader characteristics and behaviors needed in environmental organizations. Through an enhanced understanding of what environmental leaders must do and be, we sought to identify the educational and training needs of these individuals. And finally, we were personally interested in hearing environmental leaders' dreams and emotions, frustrations and joys, problems, challenges, fears, and desires.

APPROACHING THE CHALLENGE

To determine the generalizability of current leadership and management theories to environmental change advocacy and practice, we wanted our sample to represent a diversity of environmental issues, profit and nonprofit structures, and urban and rural perspectives. A number of environmental directories and association membership lists were used to identify leaders of organizations that were involved in environmental advocacy, environmental issues education, and the provision of goods or services with environmental purposes.

Having identified our research sample, we turned to the question of research methodology. Although there is a growing school of theorists who value the qualitative approach, quantitative methods "continue to enjoy methodological hegemony" in the scientific community (Bryman, Stephens, & Campo, 1996). We understood that qualitative research alone would not satisfy many mainstream academics. We also believed that our results would be more robust if we used multiple methods of data collection and analysis. Given the nascent stage of empirical research on environmental leadership, the idea of methodological triangulation and the complementarities of multiple methods appealed to us. We saw a potential synergy from methodological triangulation that would enhance the valid-

ity, reliability, and usefulness of research data. Thus, we entered the design phase of the project without a firm alignment to one research method or another, but stayed open to the possibilities of alternative means of data gathering and analysis.

In this study, we hoped to capture both the specific situational contexts, as well as the broader institutional landscape in which these leaders operated. We wanted to know not only what was happening (quantitative), but also why it was happening (qualitative). Consistent with positivistic research objectives, we viewed scientific rigor, deductive reasoning, hypothesis testing of highly valid, reliable, and objective data, generalizability of findings, and acceptance by the mainstream scientific community as important research design criteria. Alternatively, we saw the need to focus on the meaning of the data, to elicit leaders' points of view, and to develop ideas inductively as being equally important design criteria. We were intrigued by the potential of qualitative inquiry to reveal the flavor and texture, color, individuality, complexity, and historical and cultural background of leaders and leadership in these organizations. We were also eager to engage with environmental leaders and to explore their words and actions in order to understand the totality of each individual leader's experience and situation.

In the end, we decided it was important to use multiple methods of data gathering and analysis to create multiple views of leadership and to see how individuals changed over time and under what circumstances, in order to create a richer, deeper understanding of the environmental leadership phenomenon. Rather than viewing various research methods as part of an incompatible quantitative–qualitative dichotomy (Guba & Lincoln, 1994), we saw them as complementary modes of investigation (Bryman, 1995; Mason, 1996). Additionally, and by no means an insignificant motivation, was our belief that using multiple methods would make our findings more palatable to the academic research community, and thus strengthen our chance of being published in a respected journal.

DEVELOPING RESEARCH INSTRUMENTS

In the research design process, the qualitative–quantitative research perspectives dichotomy was replicated within our research team. One of us had minimal quantitative research experience and was steeped in the qualitative method. She envisioned the extensive use of unstructured qualitative interview questions and began framing the kinds of questions we wanted to explore. The other had extensive experience in both methods. Drawing from previous research studies on related topics, she assembled a collection of survey questionnaires and structured interview

questions that would lay the groundwork for comparative analyses with other types of leaders.

We initially cast our conceptual net widely in deliberations on what data to gather. We were interested in both the private and public lives of environmental leaders, so developed a series of questions to gather information about leaders' personal and organizational lives. We wanted to ask respondents to describe themselves: their age, education, marital and family status, career history, current job title, reasons for joining and maintaining a role in their organizations, the degree to which they shared their organization's vision, who had most influenced their beliefs and values, what environmental issues were most important to them personally, and what should be done about these issues and by whom. We developed open-ended questions to learn what environmental leaders considered to be their greatest personal career accomplishments, and their future career aspirations. Given the extensive empirical research on personal and environmental values (Agle & Caldwell, 1999; Dunlap & Scarce, 1991), we decided to take a quantitative approach to obtain data about these leaders' values. To assess environmental values and beliefs, we used a 30-item Environmental Opinion Survey (Egri, 1999), which was comprised of items from various measures of environmental concern. To assess personal values, we used the Schwartz Value Survey (Schwartz, 1994), which measures the extent to which a person values achievement, benevolence, conformity, hedonism, power, security, self-direction, stimulation, tradition, and universalism. These were then used to determine the degree to which an individual is open to change or conservative, and is motivated by self-enhancement or self-transcendence values. Including both of these questionnaires was important for us to be able to test hypotheses about whether environmental leaders were different or similar to leaders in other types of organizations.

Given the lack of empirical literature on environmental leadership, we looked to the established leadership literature. Despite the plethora of leadership theories and instruments (Bass, 1990), we found that no one model completely fit what we were looking for. Given the exploratory nature of this study, we were reluctant to limit ourselves to testing only one model of leadership. So we decided to be eclectic and gather information that would relate to various leadership models, each of which would serve as a stepping-stone for comparisons to other types of organizational leaders. The challenge then became one of deciding which leadership data would best be gathered through qualitative means (open-ended interview questions) or through quantitative means (closed-ended questionnaire items). We struggled with the trade-offs between qualitative data (conceptual density, contextual realism, and relevance) and quantitative data (conceptual consistency and parsimony, generalizability, precision of

measurement, and ease of analysis) (Bryman, 1995; Guba & Lincoln, 1994; Mason, 1996; Patton, 1990). There was also the practical issue of how much time and energy respondents would be willing to commit to participate in an extensive interview as well as complete a collection of survey questionnaires. Thus we were very cognizant about balancing our (almost inexhaustible) need for data with respecting respondents' willingness and generosity in providing data. Based on our experience in previous research studies that used combined methods (in-depth interviews and survey questionnaires), we knew that survey questionnaires that were brief and had high face validity to respondents were more likely to be completed and returned. We also knew that there was a higher risk of incomplete data due to unreturned survey questionnaires. Given our relatively small sample, we could not afford to have these data as a central part of the study findings or at the very least, there needed to be alternative measures incorporated into the interviews.

We started our search for measures of leadership styles by reviewing established quantitative measures. We looked for an instrument that would provide valid and reliable data for a wide variety of leadership qualities or competencies. In addition, we looked for an instrument that was short and easy to complete as well as being relevant to leaders in both for-profit and nonprofit organizations. Among the various quantitative measures of leadership styles, perhaps the most prevalent current measure of transformational, transactional, and *laissez-faire* leadership styles is Bass and Avolio's (1990) Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire. While conceptually congruent with our initial ideas about environmental leadership, we viewed the length of this questionnaire (versions range from 80 to 142 items) to be prohibitive for use in this study. We had a similar concern (in addition to validity, reliability, and relevance issues) about other established leadership questionnaires such as the LBDQ and Hersey and Blanchard's Leadership Effectiveness and Adaptability Description (Bass, 1990). As we evaluated the various leadership models and measures, we found ourselves returning back to Quinn's (1988) competing values model of managerial leadership, which one of us had used in a previous study of leaders of nonprofit organizations. The multidimensional focus of this leadership model was conceptually appealing since it proposes that leadership involves the balancing of competing demands that require the performance of various managerial roles. The competing values instrument had been proven valid and reliable in a wide variety of organizations, and not inconsequentially, there was a short 25-item version available. Although this instrument did not explicitly measure transformational/transactional leadership qualities and behaviors, there were behavioral indicators of each style within the various roles. Thus, we chose to use the competing values questionnaire because it promised to yield important data that could then be used in comparisons

with leaders in other types of organizations. However, we were also aware that this instrument did not provide a complete in-depth picture of the process of leading in these organizations.

In our literature search, we found Bryman's (1992) and Parry's (1998) call for a grounded theory approach for uncovering the process of leadership to be intriguing and convincing. We noted the parallels between Bass and Avolio's (1990) transformation/transactional/*laissez-faire* leadership typology and Bryman's (1996) new leadership/traditional leadership/non-leadership typology. While we had the "conceptual safety net" of the competing values questionnaire, a fair degree of trust in the qualitative research process (more for one of us than the other) was needed to relinquish predetermined measures in favor of open-ended questions about these aspects of leadership and leading. Even so, we had identified a preliminary set of leadership styles, behaviors, characteristics, and skills categories (Bass, 1985; Bryman et al., 1996; Yukl, 1989) and anticipated (hoped) that respondents would provide confirming evidence of managerial role behaviors. With this in mind, we developed a number of open-ended questions asking respondents to identify the most important leadership skills they needed to be successful, their leadership strengths and deficits, how they motivated others, and what they enjoyed most and least about being a leader in general and in their own organizations in particular. In addition, we developed questions asking respondents to describe their work activities and to prioritize these activities in terms of time consumed.

We started our study looking primarily at leadership skills, leadership behaviors, and environmental and personal values, but as we began our thematic analysis of the interview transcripts, it became clear that environmental leadership depended to a great extent on organizational context. It was impossible to separate a leader from his or her organization. At the same time we were coming to this realization, we discovered a newly published *Academy of Management Review* article titled "The Nature and Implications of Contextual Influences on Transformational Leadership: A Conceptual Examination" (Pawar & Eastman, 1997). This article provided us with a framework for comparing organizational contexts, and enabled us to put language to the information we were gaining from our respondents. This serendipitous discovery made our analysis much easier, as we were able to use and adapt Pawar and Eastman's framework rather than inventing our own.

Since we were interested in the organizational context within which these leaders operated, we developed a number of questions about the goals, cultures, operations, and structures of their organizations. Respondents would be asked open-ended questions to describe their organizations' history and mission, organizational strengths and barriers in achieving goals, the environmental issues that the organization considered

to be top priority, sources of information about these issues, the kinds of initiatives/strategies the organization has taken to address these issues, the respondent's personal role in these initiatives, and major changes anticipated in the organization in the next 5 years. They would also be asked close-ended questions about the number of paid and volunteer staff; proportion of work output in terms of product, service, or advocacy; sources of financing; and the relative importance of various organizational stakeholders. To gather information on organization structures, respondents would be asked to draw organizational charts. We would also solicit printed materials describing the respondents' organizations.

We looked at the final set of interview questions and questionnaires with some trepidation. We would be asking respondents at least 41 questions during the interviews (the form had grown to be 10 pages long) and then would be asking them to answer a total of 111 scale items for the three questionnaires (another 10 pages). In addition, all interviews were to be tape recorded and transcribed. What were we going to do with all these data?

Data Collection

Significantly, very few of the leaders we approached to participate in the study refused. It appeared that they, too, were deeply interested in our research questions. Many of these leaders worked in isolation in small organizations, some were breaking ground in new technologies with new approaches to management, and some were new to their leadership roles. But all seemed eager to learn what others like them were experiencing and how they were coping.

The New Englander with roots in Wyoming undertook to gather the data in the United States. She did all the interviewing herself, and found that the most interesting part of the project was the inspiration and enjoyment derived from spending time with the interviewees, learning about their organizations, and probing into their stories. The British Columbian with strong roots in the environmental community undertook to gather the data in Canada. One might say that the Canadian was less fortunate in having a much larger research budget and agenda, so she hired research assistants to do much of the interviewing.

Depending on how loquacious the respondent was, the face-to-face interviews took anywhere from 1 to 3 hours. Because effective interviews require intense listening, and require the interviewer to show respect, a high level of interest in, and a strong desire to know the respondent (Rubin & Rubin, 1995), we developed rapport with many of these fascinating and inspiring characters. For example, there was the brilliant founder

of a successful nonprofit ecotourism/research organization whose tuitions and manual labor supported top scientists at research sites all around the world. There was the director of a major wildlife refuge whose mission was to speak for the animals in the refuge. For-profit leaders were also doing unusual and interesting work. One young charismatic entrepreneur was developing and marketing reusable menstrual products as a way of keeping disposables out of the waste stream. Another leader was involved in a company that was developing technology to power a zero emission engine. Others were busy, matter-of-fact folks like the CEO of an environmental consulting company who was flattered to be interviewed and willing to help the researchers, but opted for efficiency in the process.

In many instances, the rapport and empathy that developed during the interview emerged when some of the leaders took the opportunity to seek advice on their current organizational crises. Being able to switch hats from interviewer to management professor after the research interview seemed to be an appropriate opportunity to reciprocate the time these leaders spent contributing to our research. The kinds of organizational problems we consulted on ranged from recruiting the right people, developing equity in compensation systems, conducting performance appraisals that would motivate without creating the expectation of great salary increases, deciding how much information to share with subordinates about organizational financial crises, determining what kinds of decisions should be made by employees on their own and what kinds must be cleared through the leader, figuring out how to get volunteer boards to do more fundraising, and so forth.

> The key to success in interacting with subjects is the establishment and maintenance of rapport. When rapport is established, the subject shows a willingness to cooperate in achieving the goals of the study and trusts the researcher to handle personal and often sensitive information with tact and objectivity. When rapport is achieved, the aims of the study are balanced by the human qualities of warmth, harmony of interest, bonhomie, and the like. (Shaffir & Stebbins, 1991, p. 144)

The willingness of our respondents to spend additional time filling out three lengthy questionnaires was in large part due to the rapport that developed during the interview. All of the U.S. respondents (after some follow-up calls that used the personal relationship developed during the interview to guilt-trip the respondents into returning the surveys) and 74% of the Canadian respondents returned these.

CODING AND DATA ANALYSIS

After the excitement of meeting new people and gathering information, the reality of what we had done set in. Simply put, we had too much data. Even though we were firmly committed to the merits of qualitative research methods, it was relatively easy to start first with inputting respondents' quantitative data into a database and then conduct preliminary statistical analyses. The same could not be said for the over 150 hours of interview tapes that needed to be first transcribed and then coded. Even with the use of a qualitative coding software program, we found separately reviewing transcripts of 78 taped interviews, coding, and then comparing our results to be a very time-consuming and labor-intensive process.

For the qualitative interview data, we had developed an initial coding scheme and then added to it as the coding process proceeded. Open coding is one of the basic aspects of grounded theory method (Strauss & Corbin, 1990), and we found it useful to remain open to new themes suggested by our respondents. We knew what we were looking for, but we were also looking for themes we hadn't yet considered. When more than one respondent mentioned something that hadn't been in our original coding scheme, we added it. For example, when looking at individuals' personality characteristics and leadership skills, we started with Yukl's (1989) model, which included need for achievement, need for power, self-confidence, emotional maturity, technical skills, conceptual skills, and interpersonal skills. Other dimensions that emerged during the coding of the interview transcripts included need for affiliation, patience, perseverance, spiritual orientation, political skills, and time management skills.

Our initial codes for barriers to the organization reaching its full potential included financial/lack of funds; bureaucratic mindsets; being a pioneer where market demand and understanding aren't there yet; finding the right people/employees with appropriate skills, values, and interests; and resistance to change in the marketplace. We then added another six items: competition; developing staff; too much work, not enough time; lack of alignment regarding action plans, or lack of a shared vision; power struggles; lack of community will; and site location. These additional categories certainly extended our understanding of the social processes in these organizations. In coding current organizational initiatives or strategies for meeting its objectives, we had anticipated education, advocacy, conflict management, organization of coalitions, litigation, letter-writing campaigns, and preservation through purchase of land (all items contained in Snow's [1992] survey of conservation organizations). But in analyzing our surveys, we learned that some organizations chose to buck the system and circumvent the rules as a strategy. Thus, we added new, unanticipated code items.

There were some themes for which we had few initial codes, and our analysis provided a wealth of ideas. When we asked why the respondents thought environmental issues facing their organizations would either be the same or different in the next five years, we learned that not only was depletion of nonrenewable resources an issue, but increasing material consumption worldwide, increased disparity between the haves and the have-nots, scientific progress, demographic shifts, changes in the regulatory environment, and the degree to which key habitat will remain in or fall into private hands were important issues for these leaders. When we asked about the work activities that respondents engaged in, they added seven items to our initial set of 15 codes. When we inquired what skills they considered most useful, respondents added the following to our initial codes: visioning, flexibility, being appreciative, goal setting, managing information systems, being an ethical compass, having a sense of humor, and fundraising skills.

When we wondered about the most enjoyable aspects of being a leader, there were two people who said they *didn't* enjoy being a leader, and others who said that they enjoyed having power, having access to the big-picture view, and having discretion over their calendars (flexibility)—none of which was in our original coding scheme. Another item that we hadn't anticipated for what leaders enjoyed least was leaders' inability to measure their accomplishments. These leaders felt that there were no measurables for tracking their success, since success was measured by something absolute (like clean air or clean water) that was achievable globally only in the theoretical sense. Only one leader felt that her work was measurable. She disbanded her organization when wolves were reintroduced to Yellowstone Park, since her mission of wolf reintroduction was accomplished. No one else had reached completion. The implications of learning that one of the stressors of environmental leadership is an inability to measure accomplishments is to help leaders create mini-goals, elements of the larger action plan that can represent fulfillment or fruition. If we had rigidly followed our initial coding scheme, we would have missed the idea that one of a leader's major rewards is being able to measure his or her achievement. The implications of the theme of measurability are varied. First, it's important to train environmental leaders how to set both short-term as well as long-term goals, and to celebrate milestones along the way. It's vital to help boards of directors of environmental organizations to focus their strategic planning on setting intermediate accomplishments, and rewards that acknowledge and reward their achievement. Since so many environmental issues are monumental and rarely solvable, it's easy for discouragement and burnout to set in by looking at what's left undone instead of what has been accomplished.

Reporting the Results

When we initially wrote up our results, the data reflected primarily facts, not feelings. We said, for example, that nonprofit organizations tended to be more diversified in their interest in environmental issues than for-profit organizations. Nonprofits focused on 2.68 issues, while for-profit focused on 1.84 issues. While this piece of information is certainly interesting, it's not nearly as interesting as what individual respondents said about the environmental issues on which their organizations focused. For-profits focused mainly on the issue that affected their core product or service; for example, waste disposers were mainly interested in waste management and water consultants were primarily interested in clean water. One for-profit leader in the hazardous waste business talked about a hot button issue for his organization being the Brown Fields program, which provides economic incentive and protection from liability for any potential buyer of a property that was previously contaminated. In contrast, nonprofit organizations listed more far-ranging interests. One advocacy organization listed rationing of the wilderness, cultural as well as biological diversity, environmental justice (don't put the trash in their backyard), motorized vehicles in the wilderness, the rights of nature versus the rights of humans, resort communities, and the impact of extraction of natural resources on the culture of indigenous peoples, to name just a few. A nonprofit leader in the education business talked about the role of fire in ecosystems, native fishing rights, and the impact of overuse.

Reports in the form of statistics, tables, charts, and figures lose the immediacy, the personal, the human interest, and the ability to identify and relate to the people involved. It is the researchers who sense the intimacy while the readers see only charts and numbers. Without the qualitative element, readers don't hear the voices, see the faces, and experience the feelings. We had some inspiring and revealing quotes from respondents. One of us lobbied hard to include the voices, particularly since she had done the majority of the interviews and felt a personal affinity with the respondents. The other of us looked for a few highly relevant quotes, and could easily let the rest go, since she was more comfortable with the statistics and wasn't as close to the respondents. We ended up compromising. The statistical analysis was the job of one, while the selection of colorful quotes to enliven the statistics was the job of the other.

We had another provocative discussion when it came to writing our results. We had several audiences. We felt an obligation to our respondents, to environmental practitioners in general, and to the academic research community to present our findings in ways that would be meaningful to each. We debated which of these three audiences took priority in terms of reporting study findings. This discussion reflected the tension in

our research method values with one strongly lobbying for a more qualitative approach and the other lobbying for the importance of reporting quantitative data. This tension was reflected in the final outcome of our work, which enabled the interplay of qualitative and quantitative methods, and resulted in a study that satisfied multiple constituencies as well as both authors.

We wanted to be socially responsible researchers. We deplore research that takes and uses data without giving something back. As a sign of our respect for their work and appreciation of their gifts of information, ideas, and feelings to us, our first publication was a lengthy report sent to our respondents. Titled "What We're Learning About Environmental Leaders," this report presented demographic information about our interviewees, what they listed as their organization's strengths and weaknesses, what they listed as their personal leadership strengths and weaknesses, how they saw their jobs, what they felt were the most important skills they needed to do their jobs, ways they described their leadership styles, what they liked most and least about their role as leaders, what their environmental and workplace values are, and how they influence others. This report focused on the needs and interests of our respondents. While it made some generalizations about the differences between nonprofit and for-profit leaders, the report focused on identifying areas where support could make a difference to these leaders in balancing their multiple roles as well as the skills and abilities they needed to develop. Our respondents were interested in how others like them were faring—they wanted the "family album." They also wanted a quick read, and they wanted to know only what would be immediately useful. They weren't interested in the background theory or the academic literature, just what we had discovered about them.

Bryman, Bresnen, Beardsworth, and Keil (1988) argue that qualitative research is more useful to practitioners, and we found this to be the case. So our first was a friendly report, written in the first person, which solicited additional response and reflection from respondents. Several respondents wrote back with ideas, comments, and appreciation. One respondent sent us some of her own environmental poetry as a thank-you for our report. These words of appreciation and encouragement were highly motivating to us, and demonstrated that environmental leaders on the front lines cared about what we were doing and took the time from their busy lives to communicate and support our work.

Regardless of our personal preferences for reporting, our academic audience demanded the third person. The academic research culture trusts results dense with references to the previous theory and empirical research on which the study was built. It holds as legitimate results that are heavy with charts, tables, numbers, statistical test results, hypotheses, and

footnotes. We were able to deliver a scholarly article to this audience because the lead author had experience in quantitative research and was able to maintain objectivity and distance. Comments from the journal editor and reviewers provided encouraging feedback for this aspect of our work. One reviewer wrote "A very ambitious endeavor. Lots of variables, lots of measures, lots of good data, and lots of good ideas." It was clear what the academic audience valued, so we worked hard to deliver.

TRIANGULATION REVISITED

> Using triangulation is recognition that the researcher needs to be open to more than one way of looking at things. A corollary to this insight is that purity of method is less important than dedication to relevant and useful information. (Patton, 1990, p. 193)

In this research project, we enacted the principle of triangulation in several ways. Methodological triangulation informed our decision to gather data through both qualitative interviewing and questionnaire surveys, and then to analyze these data using both content analysis and statistical procedures. Theoretical triangulation was achieved by using different theoretical lenses to understand various aspects of leadership in order to develop a multi-faceted model of environmental leadership that encompassed personal values (managerial and environmental), traits (personality characteristics and skills), and leadership style (transformation/transactional leadership theory and the competing values theory of leadership). Each one of these theoretical lenses helped piece together more of the puzzle that is environmental leadership. Although sharing a common interest in learning more about environmental leadership, our divergent perspectives on research methods and processes was constant throughout the project (i.e., investigator triangulation). To a lesser degree, we did not have as much data triangulation as we would have liked. Although we gathered and analyzed organizational documents, the bulk of our data was provided by each leader. A more effective data triangulation strategy would have included the collection of data from other organizational members as well.

What if we had just done quantitative research? We would have ended up with an incomplete story. The complexity of the relationship of factors would have been less apparent. We wouldn't have understood the role of organizational context in determining leadership processes. It was enormously helpful to our respondents to know how they stood in comparison to those operating in similar environments. Understanding the interplay between individual leaders and their organizational contexts was undoubtedly a valuable contribution to the literature. We discovered as we coded

our interview transcripts the sensitivity to context that qualitative research affords. To the degree that leadership is context-sensitive (Bryman et al., 1996), contextual differences between similar organizations can illuminate variations in leadership processes and their impact. Leadership depends on the relationships of those in a social setting at a certain point in time. How an individual leads largely depends on the particular relationships, situations, and needs of leaders and followers. As Bryman (1992) and Parry (1998) have argued, a grounded theory research approach using content analysis captures the process of leadership better than more quantitative methodologies. It also captures the color, individuality, and vivacity of the individuals who participated in the study.

What if we had done only qualitative interviews? We wouldn't have been able to generalize our findings with as much certainty and credibility. For example, it would have been more difficult to establish the nature of personal values or managerial roles differences between leaders of environmental organizations and other types of organizations. If we had only done qualitative interviews, we would not have been able to provide such a complete picture of leaders and leadership in environmental organizations. There is an argument to be made for the efficiency of quantitative data to convey a large amount of information in less space than it would take to convey the same findings in words. For example, the table containing leaders' scores for the performance of various managerial roles provided a concise one-half page summary of information that would have taken many more pages to communicate in prose. Like it or not, journal page limits are a pragmatic reality for researchers. Furthermore, and to us significantly, it would have been harder to have achieved our goal of being published in a mainstream academic journal.

What are the limitations of multiple methods? It was a lot of work to do both qualitative and quantitative research. We spent months locating respondents. We had to limit the number of respondents due to the time and expense of gathering their data. It took nearly a year to conduct all the interviews, and another year to transcribe and code them all. If we had done only quantitative research, our sample size would have been significantly larger, and the time entering and analyzing data would have been considerably shorter.

In the end, it became clear to us that the synthesis of alternative research methods enabled us to speak to the culture of the academy, the needs of our respondents, and at some future point, to our third audience who are the environmental leaders/practitioners who were not respondents in our study and who are not academically oriented.

CONCLUDING COMMENTS

Because environmental leadership is multifaceted and holistic, our methods in understanding environmental leadership needed to mirror these conditions. Each approach is better than the other for understanding certain types of problems, so integrating the two approaches yielded new insights. As is not surprising in grounded theory research, we grew interested in our respondents as individuals. These people were not simply subjects—relationships were developed. We have stayed in touch with many of them, tracking others through the media and being excited about the turns that their careers and organizations have taken since the research was completed. Two leaders started families; another organization went public and is highly successful. Some leaders have grown their organizations while some have left to start new environmental organizations or wholly new careers.

Ours was far more than an intellectual exercise; it involved our emotions and our own personal values, as well as the social climate in which we conducted this study. We cared deeply about environmental issues, and we cared about these leaders—about who they were, why they did their work, what their days were like, what their triumphs and struggles were, and how they managed to sustain themselves in the face of incredible obstacles. Because we were more than scientists testing hypotheses on subjects and were personally interested in our respondents and their work, we cared about what they were doing. We paid attention to things we might have otherwise missed, such as how a leader's dedication to an urgent issue might cause him or her to put more pressure or unreasonable demands on followers than he or she otherwise might. Furthermore, it was highly motivational, fun, and interesting to us as researchers to make these personal connections. In a few cases, the subjects later became friends. The objectivity that was maintained by the quantitative aspects of the research was balanced by the subjectivity and researcher immersion into the professional (and sometimes personal) lives of our respondents. It may be (although we have never explored this assumption) that women's research styles are more likely to extend beyond the professional arena and reach into the personal, not only their own but that of their respondents.

We were both interested in making results meaningful to our respondents; we were both interested in contributing to the theoretical perspective on environmental leadership, and we were certainly both interested in appealing to the academic audience in the hope of making a contribution to the literature. We enjoyed our differences, and exploited them to mutual advantage on all aspects of research design, data gathering and analysis, and writing. We were, after all, not only collaborators but two women friends who shared several years of work, who from the first

moment of conception of the project enjoyed the fun of debate, of the devil's advocate role, and support of the other. For the one whose experience was mainly in qualitative research, it was a huge education. For the more experienced researcher, it was a trial to have her assumptions continuously challenged about how to analyze and how to present findings. We both gained and grew from the interaction.

As we dealt with the lives of our respondents, we were also dealing with the messiness and excitement of our own lives, which formed either the background or at some points in time, the foreground of our research. Research isn't antiseptic or tidy, nor was it our sole preoccupation. One of us was at the pretenure stage in her career, teaching full time, pursuing multiple research projects, on the board of two nonprofit societies, while parenting two teenage sons. The other was on sabbatical in another part of the world, away from her family, teaching full time, researching full time, while supporting her spouse in the throes of a difficult doctoral dissertation. As women and as friends, we brought the backdrop of our lives to our work. We didn't meet at one office or the other; we met in each other's homes. We did our coding at the kitchen table, over endless cups of tea and crumbs from the lunch that one or the other had prepared. We trusted and liked each other, so the arguments/debates were interesting and fun, not stressful. The work itself was sometimes stressful, and fitting it in and around the rest of our personal and professional lives was certainly a source of stress; but our relationship was a source of pleasure and mutual support.

What practical results might derive from our work, in terms of our understanding of environmental leadership? Environmental leaders will help address the most pressing global issues today and into the new millennium, restoring and preserving the environmental quality of this planet so that citizens of all nations can exist with clean air, food, and water. Environmental leadership is an awesome responsibility, so the more we know about environmental leadership as a phenomenon, about the individuals who hold these vital positions as well as the contexts of the organizations in which they work, the better able we will be as a society to support their leadership. Multimethod/multiperspective research protocols enabled us to look at our topic through a variety of lenses. When the pictures were superimposed, we had a more accurate view of environmental leadership, and the social world in which they work their influence.

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CHAPTER 8

GROUNDED THEORY

Creating Valued Leadership Research through Partnering

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ABSTRACT

The author is involved in developing a grounded theory that explains the process of how individuals make sense of their own leadership development in an organizational setting. Specifically, this research and its findings are substantive to a New Zealand police station. To successfully implement the theoretical sampling approach used in the grounded theory method, it was evident that benefits from the research must be seen to accrue to not only the body of theoretical knowledge but also the New Zealand Police. To achieve this, time and effort has been expended to develop and manage an informal strategic alliance between the researcher and the New Zealand Police. This chapter considers this strategic alliance and its critical contribution to developing a robust grounded theory.

INTRODUCTION

Parry and Proctor (2000) noted that there needs to be a collective will from New Zealand organizations to open themselves up to research on the phenomena of leadership. The need to open up more organizations was to enable more to be understood about leadership in New Zealand organizations. The author has developed a strategy to achieve this with a New Zealand police station that has about 120 staff members. The police station is subject to a study by the author on developing a grounded theory that explains the process of how individuals make sense of their own leadership development in an organizational setting.

This strategy to "open up" an organization to researchers requires the relationship between the organization and the researcher to be viewed as one of partnership. The establishment of the partnership involves identifying how each party can help the other. Following the establishment of that partnership the relationship needs, throughout the duration of the research, to be maintained and enhanced where possible.

The process of implementing the strategy with the police has been an informal one based around progressively building working relationships with staff at each level in the organization. The initial relationship was developed with the area commander who introduced his members of the management team to the researcher. Relationships with the staff over the last one and a half years have been progressively developed throughout the station and also with policing development staff at the New Zealand Police District and National Head Quarters.

The Nature of the Strategic Alliance

Practical-minded managers of organizations look for frameworks of action that will improve the performance of some aspect of their organization. Some professional practitioners view academic scholarship as having little relevance to the real world. The view is that such scholarship develops abstract conceptual models about how some aspect of the organizational world works in a manner that focuses upon hypothetical rather than practical solutions. No doubt some of the academic community would challenge such an assertion, but nevertheless such views commonly exist (Garvin, 2000). In researching leadership development in the New Zealand Police, such concerns existed. However, these were mitigated by the process of establishing an unwritten and informal alliance. By developing a research approach based upon partnering, valued knowledge is created that benefits the respective needs of both the academic community and the New Zealand Police.

Doz and Hamel (1998) assert that within partnering value is created as a result of "the capacity of two partners to dynamically and creatively maneuver their alliance through a thicket of uncertainties, changing priorities, organisational frictions and competitive surprises." While this was written in the context of considering partnerships between commercial businesses it can also usefully reflect the relationship between the researcher and the organization being researched. The partnership develops over time and changes over time and is constantly being managed on a day-to-day basis at each level in the organization.

What initially started as a casual conversation between the author and the area commander about leadership development and a PhD research topic became a mutually beneficial dialogue about how each party could help the other. Each party had a primary focus on their own objectives and expectations. The police were seeking action research, what Patton (1990) describes as research that seeks to solve organizational or community problems. For example, the interest of police management has been to identify and develop practical ways to accelerate the development of leaders within the police. In contrast, a prime focus of the author was one of basic research to answer research questions to discover new knowledge. The objectives of both parties were compatible but the relationships to achieve them needed to be carefully managed. This sort of relationship sits comfortably with the grounded theory method. Glaser and Strauss (1967) advocate that grounded theory can "be applied we hope to contribute to the accomplishments of both sociological theory and practice" (p. 250).

This partnership with the New Zealand police station under study has the purpose of what Doz and Hamel (1998) call "cospecialisation" and "learning and internalisation." They define cospecialization as "the synergestic value creation that results from combining previously separate resources, positions, skills and knowledge sources" (p. 50). The research brought together the non-partisan application researcher's knowledge and skills with the knowledge and experiences of practitioners-in-action[1] to generate new insights about leadership development in the New Zealand Police.

For the police there is a belief or an expectation that the research will reveal the reality of the situation of station life affecting leadership development. This assumes that the knowledge about this can in fact be obtained from the station and communicated back to them. The belief exists in that the researcher has a legitimate methodology to collect data and develop this knowledge. This method and the researcher's associated sense-making of the data and information is viewed as the professional expertise that the researcher contributes to the strategic alliance. What the specific method is, while openly known to staff, creates little conversational interest with them. Rather, conversations about the method tend to be

about confidentiality of personal identities, how is the research progressing, and what is the current focus of the research.

The researcher's job is to develop a theory that accounts for much of the relevant social behavior in the leadership development of practitioners in their organizational setting. The researcher "need not know the concrete situation better than the people involved in it" (Glaser & Strauss, 1967, p. 30), but rather have the ability to make retrospective sense of meaningful lived experiences of the individual and groups in the organization (Weick, 1995).

Practitioners and academics world-wide have looked to find ways to help accelerate their own understanding of the phenomenon of leadership development (Mumford, Marks, Connelly, Zaccaro, & Reiter-Palmon, 2000). Academics and practitioners have the opportunity to work together to gain new insights. Lindblom (1990) presented an important link between lay and scholarly inquiry by concluding:

> When social scientists seek to understand, for example, how business managers decide on new investments, or how parties in a multiparty legislature construct coalitions, or how taxpayers exploit loopholes in their favor, they frequently ask the managers, legislators, or taxpayers. The social scientists thus transform lay knowledge into a professional finding. They will usually supplement the collected lay knowledge with some increments of insight, finding, for example, a pattern in their respondents' behavior of which the respondents themselves are unaware. (p. 166)

While the academic community has its own rigor of evaluating whether or not a work is scholarly, the practitioner also has their own evaluation. Simply put, if it helps the practitioner make sense of his or her view of the world or helps the individual develop actions that improve his or her own performance or improve the circumstances of others they wish to help, then to them the research has value.

What this demonstrates is that the academic researcher and the practical-minded manager can seek to learn about the same topic, and by combining their respective strengths create value to further their respective interests.

Grounded Theory as a Means of Value Creation for Practitioners

The significant contribution of grounded theory in the strategic alliance has been in its ability to represent practitioners-in-action and how they make sense of the individual and group realities they experience. As the process of data collection and analysis proceeds there is self-learning resulting from practitioner reflections stimulated by the researcher, and

group learning generated by workshops held as part of the data-gathering process of the research process. This is consistent with the second purpose of strategic alliances as defined by Doz and Hamel (1998) as an "avenue for learning new skills and internalizing new skills."

For example, field data collected in 2000 individually from management staff showed a convergence of view on some characteristics of leaders that were viewed as critical for them to have before they would be willing to follow them. They also identified some characteristics where there was divergence of view. That divergence was something that had not been openly discussed. With the permission of those involved, a workshop was held to provide feedback in a way that retained the confidentiality of who said what. The feedback identified the existence of the divergence of view without disclosing which persons held a particular view, unless they freely wanted their identity disclosed. The forum of senior staff discussed and debated these findings. The consequence was that individuals became aware of the divergence of views and shifted a topic from what Argyris (1990, p. 27) would label "a matter too sensitive to discuss" to one that became discussible. When it became discussible it created the opportunity for the senior staff to work through some aspects of the issue. How they responded to that opportunity became further data for the research.

Another example is that a number of staff commented upon completion of an interview with the researcher that they had thought and talked about their past and present life in such a confidential and constructive way that they believed it helped them think about and further their own professional development. Each interview lasted about 1 to $1\frac{1}{2}$ hours. The interview, while designed for research purposes, became recognized by some staff as an opportunity for self-learning. The joint value from it created an opportunity of an alliance between individual staff and the researcher where both could benefit, without compromising either parties' objectives. The consequential willingness of participants to be involved has increased the range and quality of data collected.

The Value of the Strategic Alliance to Theoretical Sampling

The quality of the data collected and the effectiveness of theoretical sampling are arguably the most important determinants of the robustness of grounded theory.

Theoretical sampling is required to stop only when an adequate grounded theory has emerged that answers the research questions and addresses the research objective (Dey, 1999). Theoretical sampling not only enables the emergence of a conceptual framework; it is also used as a

way of checking on the adequacy of the emerging grounded theory (Glaser, 1978).

The basic sampling question in using the grounded theory approach is, What groups or subgroups does the researcher begin with and turn to next in data collection? The criteria used are that proposed by Glaser (1978, p. 43); "Our criteria are those of theoretical purpose and relevance not of structural circumstance or of preconceived conception." People from different parts of the organization, or from different groupings within the organization, are chosen as they are needed as the research unfolds. To have such ease of access is not a given, but a privilege earned by the researcher.

The reason to enter into mutual dialogue was a result of the creation of value. The management of that alliance is based upon maintaining and growing the degree of trust. It is a trust that requires constant efforts to build and uphold. Even if the value created for the organization is believed to be significant but trust with the researcher is insufficient, then the quality of data collected through theoretical sampling can be reasonably expected to be compromised.

For the author's research, data were collected that required access to the thoughts, recalled experiences, and reflections of police staff at each level in the hierarchy of the station. At the same time, access was also sought to observe staff in action in day-today situations from management team meetings through to general duties operations. Structured and unstructured interviewing of staff, which at times may be sensitive, has been the primary method of data collection.

Schein (1999) proposed a proactive approach to structured and unstructured interviews, an approach he calls "active inquiry":

> Tactically the implementation of active inquiry involves recognition that the inquiry must be managed in such a way that the client's story is fully revealed and that the client begins to think diagnostically himself [*sic*]. If the client's story does not come out in his own words and using his own concepts, the consultant cannot get a realistic sense of what may be going on.[2] (p. 43)

Schein (1999) proposes three types of active inquiry conversations: pure inquiry, exploratory diagnostic inquiry, and confrontive inquiry. In pure inquiry the interviewee controls the process and content of the conversation, and the role of the researcher is to prompt the story and listen. It is a type of unstructured interview. The researcher's prompts are typically what was the situation, what happened, and tell me more about it. In exploratory diagnostic inquiry the researcher manages the process of the conversation of how the content is analyzed but does not insert content ideas or advice. It is one type of semi-structured interview. The questions posed ask

the interviewee to describe their feelings and reactions about parts of his or her story; explain their own hypotheses about why things happened the way they did; and to describe what actions were taken or contemplated as a consequence. In confrontive inquiry, another type of semi-structured interview, the researcher shares his or her own ideas about the process and content of the interviewee's story and seeks the interviewee to respond about a situation from a new perspective.

For the author's research Schein's pure inquiry and exploratory diagnostic inquiry approaches were used in all stages of the field research. The confronting inquiry approach was used in workshops to collect information on subsequent responses.

Trust is a Key Requirement for Theoretical Sampling

If the established trust is breached, then loyalty to the researcher is harmed and the individuals, if not the organization, can be expected to quickly exit from the relationship. If such a situation arose then the consequence is that theoretical sampling can be expected to be prevented from occurring through a lack of willing participants.

The author is bound in the strategic alliance to value and respect the well-being of staff who have provided views that in the author's research would not normally be shared in the workplace with supervisors, peers, or subordinates. In doing so the relationship that emerges with each individual enables a higher quality information to be gathered. While the research commenced with gaining information from the key informant, the relationships then developed with others in the station. The trust and confidence the area commander had in the researcher was conveyed to his senior sergeants, who in turn made up their own minds. They in turn conveyed this to the sergeants who again made up their own minds from direct contact with the author as researcher. The confidence and endorsement of the sergeants then provided the opportunity to access constables and non-sworn staff. At each level in the organization the relationships with staff have been maintained. What started as an individual experience of trust became, through a series of cascading relationships, a collective trust grounded in the individual experiences of staff. But each individual had the choice of whether to become involved or not. The growth of collective trust in researcher, as distinct from just a belief or interest in the research, was and remains critical to the success of the research.

It took a year and a half to develop the level of trust throughout the station that enables access to quality information from throughout the station to meet the access requirements that the theoretical sampling process demands. In that period the management team had changed and the ini-

tial area commander was promoted out of the station, but the informal alliance established has actively continued, as does the proactive work by the researcher to ensure that it does.

The Researcher Becomes Another Useful Actor Working within the Organization

Perhaps some researchers may say that the notion of partnering will undermine pure research. But this view is questionable. Without partnering there will be fewer organizations interested in opening themselves up to being researched.

Others may argue that any learning by participants that occurs during interviews undermines the quality of the research. For example, the mere act of interviewing may cause a degree of self-reflection by the practitioner whereby the new knowledge gained may then be applied by the practitioner in some way in the organization (Schon, 1983). However, for this author, who is looking at how leadership is learned, the practitioner self-learning event itself becomes part of the data collection. Not to use any interview technique results in there being substantially less information available to be collected, and reduces opportunities to explore with organizational staff their own view of their organizational world. Holding such a position would in this case diminish the robustness of the research, and diminish the value created from the research.

When researching the phenomena of leadership, the act of interviewing as well as observing is critical in the collection of data. So it is difficult to leave an organization unchanged by the mere act of basic research. Consequently, the researcher becomes another actor working within the organization, whose work is seen to create some value to the organization and individual practitioners over the duration of the research. This is the converse of Parry's (1998) assertion that the interviewees can be thought of as coresearchers.

Unless the organization as a whole sees that there is benefit of the research for the organization, then accessing quality information from them can be expected to be difficult and the quality of that information compromised. There must be a belief within a partner organization that value will be created to enable the organization being researched to continue to make staff available, to allow access to situations that can be observed, and to allow access to information in documents. This belief must be stronger than mere organizational goodwill to assist someone in his or her research.

CONCLUSION

Establishing a strategic alliance is a proactive strategy that contributes to resolving Parry and Proctor's observed need to access more organizations in New Zealand for the study of the leadership phenomena. The researcher develops relationships with staff who become coresearchers. Concomitantly the researcher becomes another useful actor working within the organization.

Once established, relationships need to be developed and maintained throughout the organization being studied to enable continued access to staff and quality information. Developing and maintaining trust and creating value for both parties are the two critical success factors for the strategic alliance to be enduring.

Grounded theory as a research method is made for partnership. By its nature it brings together the skills of the researcher with the real-world experiences of the researched, and in researching organizations the partnering approach is critical to enable theoretical sampling, a core part of the grounded theory method, to effectively occur.

The author's experiences are likely to be commonplace—particularly for those researchers involved in successful theoretical sampling in an organizational setting. What may be different is that instead of taking such experiences for granted the author proactively reflected upon these and turned them into educative experiences from which the knowledge derived could be applied in the future of his research. By reflecting upon the initial exploratory conversations with the key informant, certain experiences of interaction with the police became core to the emergence of strategy. By reflecting upon these initial experiences, and with the aid of the basic principles of strategic alliances used in the commercial world (which the author was already familiar with), a proactive strategy of organizational engagement in qualitative research emerged and was informally implemented.

So it appears that researchers can increase their access to prospective organizations, upon which they wish to undertake qualitative research, by engaging in a series of exploratory conversations about creating value for both parties. The first milestone on this path is the first engagement by the researcher with the prospective organization. The strategic alliance will emerge as worthwhile if it is mutually believed that the combined capabilities and capacity of the researcher and the organization will in fact create value.

NOTE

1. The term "practitioner-in-action" refers here to the observed and recalled experiences of police station staff acting in roles of either leadership or followership while engaged in police duties.
2. The term "consultant–client relationship" can be readily interchanged with "researcher–subject relationship."

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CHAPTER 9

REINTERPRETING THE MULTIFACTOR LEADERSHIP QUESTIONNAIRE

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ABSTRACT

Leadership questionnaires such as the widely used Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) have paved the way for swift leadership assessments and the development of transformational leadership programs. On the surface, such questionnaires appear time and money efficient, statistically valid and reliable, and effective in targeting individuals in need of leadership behavioral modification.

However, the philosophy underlying the construction of such questionnaires has come into question by researchers who dispute the appropriateness and usefulness of adopting universal norms of effective leadership. These concerns are based on the present state of leadership research. Some researchers support alternative approaches to leadership research, which aim to address the limitations of current research practices.

In taking an alternative research philosophy and considering the MLQ from a qualitative standpoint, new insights into the strengths and weaknesses of the leadership questionnaire may be gained. The benefits will be furthering our understanding of leadership and questioning our mainstream "received view" of the subject area. The following discussion briefly outlines current

issues of leadership research. The qualitative findings of a grounded theory study of nursing leadership are described, followed by the related qualitative interpretation of MLQ results on a sample of nurse leaders at a public hospital in Wellington, New Zealand.

LEADERSHIP RESEARCH

Leadership research thus far has created a plethora of leadership theory, which both contributes to academic and practitioner understanding and to the fragmented and sometimes opposing views as to the nature of leadership. The diversity and combined scope of the many studies of leadership has resulted in a body of knowledge that Zaccaro and Banks (2001) describe as largely disconnected and directionless. The problem is that existing leadership theories and measurement instruments do not sufficiently reflect the underlying dimensions, relationships, or processes in the leadership phenomenon (Irurita, 1996).

The approaches to the study of leadership in the latter half of the 20th century have been conducted largely under the discipline of psychology, which in turn has adopted the scientific approach of hypothesis testing with the predominant goal of theory verification. Typically, the multitude of variables identified by the minority of theory generating researchers have been teased apart and tested in isolation.

The result is the frequent use of verificational techniques testing existing theories, which already do not adequately explain the complexities of leadership. This researcher concentration on the scientific approach has further limited the ability of researchers to meaningfully explain the phenomenon of leadership (Irurita, 1996; Zaccaro & Banks, 2001). Much of the leadership literature describes the wealth of repeatedly verified leadership theory while concomitantly calling for new ways to explain the leadership phenomenon. However, an integrative and enduring theory of leadership has yet to be discovered (Parry, 1998; Yukl, 1998).

Similar to the concern over the number of leadership theories, definitions of leadership also vary widely. The diverse range of research and philosophical approaches has subsequently led to literally hundreds of definitions of leadership. As early as 1974, Stogdill remarked, "there are almost as many different definitions of leadership as there are people who have tried to define it" (1974, p. 7). Contrastingly, the complete omission of any definition of leadership in many research articles appears surprisingly common. For example, one study found 587 works referring to leadership without defining leadership (Rost, 1991, cited in Barker, 1997).

Four key characteristics have influenced the leadership definition within the present study. First, leadership is connected with the notion of

change (Parry, 1998). Second, leadership involves influencing others (Northouse, 2001; Parry, 1998; Yukl, 1998). Third, leadership occurs within a group context (Northouse, 2001). Finally, leadership involves goal attainment (Northouse, 2001).

Given the range of criteria and conceptualizations of leadership, the resulting variety of definitions reflects the wide range of approaches to the study of leadership. Therefore, for the purposes of the present study, a definition of leadership has been devised to account for the characteristics identified above. Most significantly, the definition is that leadership is a social influence process that contains complex relationships (Barker, 1997).

The following definition of social influence process closely mirrors *The Collins Dictionary and Thesaurus* definitions of "social," "influence," and "process."

> *Social*—"of or characteristic of the behavior and interaction of persons forming groups." (p. 949)
>
> *Influence*—"an effect of one person or thing on another." (p. 157)
>
> *Processes*—"a series of actions which produce a change or development." (p. 788)
>
> (McLeod, 1987)

The three dictionary definitions above may be combined to produce the definition of leadership within the present study,

> *Leadership*: The effect of a person (leader) exhibiting characteristic behaviors and interactions to affect others, in a group to produce a change or development through a series of actions.

The above definition is not to be considered the most correct definition, rather it is the definition applicable to the present study, which focuses on a social influence process of nursing leadership through change incidents.

The call for a more integrative, enduring theory must necessarily begin with alternative approaches to the study of leadership, which address the shortfalls of research approaches currently adopted. Because so many aspects associated with the nature of leadership remain in question, the qualitative aspects of leadership must be considered. Van Maanen (1982), summarized the differences between quantity and quality:

> Quality is the essential character or nature of something; quantity is the amount. Quality is the what; quantity is the how much. Qualitative refers to the meaning, the definition or analogy or model or metaphor characterizing something, while quantitative assumes the meaning and refers to a measure of it. (p. 32)

The call for alternative approaches to the study of leadership has inevitably led some researchers to consider qualitative approaches over the traditional quantitative approaches. However, both approaches may be effectively used in isolation and together to enhance our understanding of leadership.

The use of grounded theory to study leadership is gaining acceptance as an alternative approach to traditional mainstream quantitative methods. The present study employed the full grounded theory methodology outlined by Glaser and Strauss (1967) and Glaser (1978, 1992) to investigate nursing leadership at a public hospital in Wellington, New Zealand. In this study, qualitative and quantitative data were analyzed concurrently by the qualitative grounded theory data analytic method.

The salient points to note about the grounded theory approach are that the aim of grounded theory is the generation rather than the verification of theory. Two key grounded theory methods employed were the *constant comparative* method and *theoretical sampling*. The constant comparative method involved initially comparing incident to incident and then concept to concept to higher levels of abstraction. Theoretical sampling is the process by which data collection is *controlled* by the emerging theory. Theoretical sampling was conducted on the basis of theoretical relevance to the emerging theory. This involved purposive selection of comparison groups within the organization considered to have the potential to help generate properties of categories or emerging themes. The following section first describes the emergent themes and theory. The results from the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) are then displayed and the statistical results described.

A GROUNDED THEORY STUDY

The concurrent data collection and analysis of this grounded theory study involved approximately 50 hours of non-participant observation over three wards, 21 formal interviews, numerous informal interviews, document analysis and the MLQ. Formal interviews were carried out with six team leaders (nurses in charge of wards), eight nurses (from three different wards), two doctors, two nurse coordinators reporting to team leaders, and three senior nurse managers. Informal interviews included team leaders, nurses, and support staff such as a social worker and an orderly.

The initial themes that emerged were based around change incidents that were tracked over 14 months. These included the introduction of a computerized nurse roster system, nurse pay rises that resulted in industrial action, the first and second phase of a Shared Governance program, and the introduction of a Clinical Career Pathways program.

As analysis continued, lower-order themes or categories emerged that accounted for many of the issues respondents deemed to be important to nursing and leadership. These themes were then compared to draw out more abstract concepts/higher-order categories. Two higher order categories were "Repressing Leadership" and "Multiple Realities."

The higher-order category of "Repressing Leadership" represents the integration of associated lower-order categories. The overall effect of repressing leadership was the inability of nurse leaders to gain the working conditions and recognition to which they felt nurses were entitled. The factors affecting the repressing of nurse leadership are summarized below.

- Remembering history: Nurses drew on historical anecdotes and past experience when discussing nursing leadership and nursing. This included discussion of the changing roles of women in society, including family and nursing.
- Above and beyond: As well as considering historical expectations, nurses considered the current expectations placed on themselves and their leaders to work above and beyond the call of duty. Subcategories included women's work, loyalty, and staff shortages.
- Supporting: The formal and informal support networks used and maintained by nursing highlighted the perceived inadequacies of the organization-based formal support networks as well as the nurse utilization of informal support networks of colleagues.
- Leaving: High turnover among nursing staff was recognized as an ongoing problem by nurse leaders and nurses. High burnout and low recognition were two factors contributing to nursing shortages.
- Role defining: Nurse respondents considered the changing expectations of their role, particularly in terms of their relationships with other health professionals and the advancements of medical technology.

Each of the lower-order categories were considered to impact on each other, creating vicious circles of repressing nurse leadership depending on the specific change incidents nurse respondents discussed.

"Multiple Realities" formed the other higher-order category. Whereas Repressing Leadership focused on challenges and developments within nursing, Multiple Realities extended the range of inquiry to professionals who worked with nurses. Nurse respondents regularly discussed the roles of medicine and management as impacting on nursing development. These three Multiple Realities were found to be problematic in repressing the leadership that nurses attempted to demonstrate.

Multiple Realities explains the variation in perceptions between three subcultures—nursing, management and medicine, within the hospital environment—affecting organizational change efforts and nursing leadership. The variance in perceptions is closely linked to power structures

present at the hospital. The historical role of nurses as subordinates to doctors and to management encouraged a culture not favoring collaboration or any sort of collegial relationship between the groups. The separation between these groups was further strengthened by nursing being a female dominated profession, and medicine and management being dominated by men. The lower-order categories contributing to Multiple Realities included:

- Organizational opaqueness: The invisibility of formal structures and the inability of nurse leaders to obtain the information, such as nurse turnover rates, required to develop nursing and implement changes.
- Convoluting pathways: Respondents noted the difficulty in adapting to organizational changes implemented by management and nursing and the discontinuity of leaders and messages.
- Communicating: Communication channels across the three groups were considered ineffective in terms of making and maintaining contact, and the ability of the groups to understand alternative perspectives.
- Power rebalancing: Nurse leaders are challenging the traditional dominance of medicine and management and the resulting power imbalances are a source of discord between the groups.

The highest level of abstraction in the grounded theory study yielded a basic social process (BSP), which explained the overall phenomenon of *Identifying Paradox* occurring in the hospital setting. Identifying Paradox explains the social process by which staff either do not identify and unknowingly legitimize paradoxes, or identify and reconcile paradoxes created from the Multiple Realities of the three subcultures working in the hospital setting. This core category was found to explain the courses of action and variation in nurse leader behavior through organizational change incidents.

While nurses continually argue for better conditions and recognition, the Multiple Realities present in the organization work against all parties reaching an understanding. The cultures of the three groups—management, medicine, and nursing—have different foundations and cultures. As society changes, the cultures of these groups must also change to conform to society's norms. Changes to the three cultures must take place over time just as changes in wider society take place over time. Changes occurring at present reflect the realignment of the hospital culture with societal norms.

The resulting changes at the hospital have been met with resistance and confusion by staff in all areas. The use of paradoxical discourse by staff in attempts to understand the dynamic environment has led to greater resistance to many change efforts. When respondents attempted to make sense

of relationships with other staff and of the changes taking place, respondents were found to describe incidents paradoxically.

MULTIFACTOR LEADERSHIP QUESTIONNAIRE

The MLQ has been used in a wide range of research, business, and training settings to assess leadership behaviors. The MLQ's creators suggest potential uses include field and laboratory research, selection, transfer and promotion, development, and counseling (Bass & Avolio, 1997). The questionnaire is based on the concepts of transformational, transactional and *laissez-faire* leadership originally coined by Bass (1985).

The MLQ (5X) (Revised) contains 45 items identifying and measuring leadership behaviors. Nine leadership behaviors are tested, corresponding with the full range of leadership styles. Five transformational leadership behaviors comprise Idealized Attributes, Idealized Behaviors, Inspirational Motivation, Intellectual Stimulation, and Individualized Consideration. Transactional leadership behaviors are Contingent Reward, Management-by-Exception (passive), and Management-by-Exception (active). Nontransactional Leadership is measured by *Laissez-Faire* behavior. Each of the nine components are measured by four highly intercorrelated items (Bass & Avolio, 1997). Bass and Avolio (1997) described each of these leadership behaviors in detail. However, below is a brief description of each factor.

A transformational leader who displays Idealized Influence will have associates who view them in an idealized way. That is, they will have trust and confidence in the leader and identify with the leader and their mission. Idealized Influence encompasses the empowerment of associates by developing autonomy, achievement, and high levels of performance. One possible disadvantage of such leadership is the possibility that the leader may be replaced by associates who become capable of modifying and contributing to the leader's mission.

Inspirational Motivation involves the leader providing meaning and promoting positive expectations of work. This can take place without the associates identifying with the leader, as in the Idealized Influence factor. Besides having associates identifying with and sharing goals and understanding, the leader displaying the full range of leadership behaviors will also provide Intellectual Stimulation, encouraging associates to think about problems in new ways. Associates are encouraged to think about problems in new ways by questioning assumptions, beliefs, and values. In this way, workers develop a capacity for troubleshooting future problems in creative ways without the direct intervention of the leader.

Individualized Consideration requires the leader to develop individuals' potential through recognizing and satisfying current needs and expanding

and developing those needs. This needs to occur at both an individual level and at an organizational level, developing and maintaining a culture that is supportive of individual growth.

While the most effective transformational leader will display all five of the transformational factors, transactional behaviors are also appropriate for different situations. The difference between a transactional and transformational leader is that the transformational leader is able to draw upon the transformational and transactional behaviors. On the other hand, transactional leaders are only able to draw on transactional behaviors.

Contingent Reward is a transactional behavior involving the leader stressing an exchange or transaction in exchange for subordinates meeting agreed-upon objectives. Management-by-Exception can take two forms: active or passive. A leader monitoring to avoid mistakes while maintaining the status quo falls into the active category. The leader who intervenes when things go wrong falls into the passive category. Finally, Laissez-Faire describes the non-leader who is distinguished by avoidance of leadership. Examples include delaying decisions and providing no feedback, rewards, or involvement.

The administration of the MLQ (Form 5X) occurred within the first 4 months of the start of the fieldwork. Full MLQ profiles were completed for 18 nurse team leaders and two senior nurse managers. About 196 respondents completed questionnaires about 20 leaders. The respondents included peers, subordinates, superiors, and outside workers nominated by the leaders.

The individual profiles were then pooled to compare the profiled nurse leaders with New Zealand National norms based on approximately 600 MLQ respondents throughout New Zealand (MLQ P/L, 2001). A reliability test using Cronbach's alpha was also conducted to consider the consistency in answers across respondents.

Overall, the profiled nurse leaders were significantly higher in the demonstration of transformational leadership behaviors than the New Zealand norms. Nurses demonstrated also significantly more contingent reward and Management-by-Exception (active) behaviors. Management-by-Exception (passive) was not significantly different from New Zealand norms. Laissez-Faire was also significantly higher for the nurse leader sample. Table 9.1 compares the nurse sample with national norms (MLQ P/L, 2001).

A reliability test was conducted for each of the leadership factors. The results are displayed in Table 9.2. The nurse sample had similar reliability scores for Idealized Attributes, Idealized Behaviors, and Inspirational Motivation. However, reliability appeared higher in the *Laissez-Faire* subscale in the nursing sample. Intellectual Stimulation, Individual Consideration, Management-by-Exception (active), and Management-by-Exception (passive) had lower alpha coefficients in the nurse sample than the national sample.

If the MLQ results are considered in isolation, certain conclusions may be drawn. The overall nurse profiles suggest that nurse leaders display an effective range of transformational leadership skills compared to other New Zealand leaders. However, the results of the reliability test show lower reliability in the nursing sample than the New Zealand sample. The causes of lower reliability in some leadership factors could be attributed to the homogenous nature of the nurse sample. That is, only team leader volunteers from one organization took part in the study. Therefore, there could be factors within the sample that cause anomalous results.

The MLQ is often administered in isolation of other leadership measures. Leadership training in organizations usually focuses on increasing the frequencies of transformational leadership behavior and active transactional leadership while minimizing the frequency of Management-by-Exception (passive) and non-leadership.

However, within the context of the qualitative grounded theory study, the results support a wide range of context-dependent findings and reflect the overriding organizational culture and effects of organizational change. The overall profile of nurse leaders suggest that nurse leaders display higher than average transformational leadership behaviors and should therefore be effective leaders through organizational changes. However, data collected through interviews and observations indicate that this is not necessarily the case. The higher-order categories Repressing Leadership and Multiple Realities have highlighted the difficulties nurse leaders face within the hospital. For example, management and medicine often resist nurse-driven organizational change.

Table 1. Mean Scores of MLQ Profiles of the New Zealand Leadership Survey and the Nursing Sample

Leadership Factors	*New Zealand Sample (Scale 1–4)*	*Nurse Sample (Scale 1–4)*	*SD for Nurse Sample*
Idealized attributes	2.9	3.1	0.68
Idealized behaviors	2.7	2.9	0.74
Inspirational motivation	2.8	3.1	0.74
Intellectual stimulation	2.7	2.9	0.72
Individualized consideration	2.7	3.0	0.78
Contingent reward	2.8	3.0	0.72
MBE (active)	2.0	2.2	0.96
MBE (passive)	1.1	1.2 (n.s.)	0.96
Laissez-faire	0.7	0.8	0.94

Note All differences are significant at $p < 0.05$ except MBE (passive) and Laissez-Faire.

Table 2. Reliabilities (α) of MLQ Profiles of the New Zealand Leadership Survey and the Nursing Sample

Leadership Factors	*New Zealand Sample*	*Nurse Sample*
Idealized attributes	0.70	0.68
Idealized behaviors	0.67	0.67
Inspirational motivation	0.80	0.83
Intellectual stimulation	0.77	0.58
Individualized consideration	0.71	0.46
Contingent reward	0.66	0.61
MBE (active)	0.76	0.71
MBE (passive)	0.61	0.71
Laissez-faire	0.65	0.80

However, management-driven change is often forced onto nurses in traditional top-down style, which has been accepted by nurses who, in the past, have maintained a subordinate, nonleader role in hospital management.

The importance of considering the MLQ results with account for the specific context of the organization is that if nurse leaders were to undergo leadership training subsequent to the administration of the MLQ, the training would solely focus on increasing transformational behaviors while minimizing transactional and nonleadership behaviors *regardless* of situation. For example, ideally, leaders should seek to minimize non-leadership behavior such as *Laissez-Faire*. But the qualitative data suggested that this might be very difficult for team leaders. For example, one respondent noted that her team leader was responsible for two wards and was rarely in the ward in which the respondent worked. Therefore, she would have to be absent for a significant part of the day.

The relatively low reliability coefficients reflected the difficulty some nurse respondents had in answering such questions. Typically nurse respondents noted that team leaders were often absent when needed because of the high number of meetings team leaders attended. Also, team leaders generally worked 5 days a week within the context of a 24-hour-a-day operation. Thus, at 3:00 A.M. on a Sunday morning, the team leader was likely to be "Absent when needed," as one MLQ item considers. The respondent completing the questionnaire could interpret questions in several ways within this context. Using the "Absent when needed" item as an example, some respondents appeared to take context into consideration. That is, respondents took into account that it was physically impossible for their leaders to be available given the high workload and nature of the ward. Similar contextual issues surround the other eight factors of the MLQ. Each of the factors is now considered in more detail.

The most unreliable item measuring the Idealized Attributes subscale was, "Displays a sense of power and confidence." The low reliability of this question could be explained qualitatively. Lack of power and repression of leadership were identified in interviews and observations as a contributing factor to nursing maintaining the status quo. Therefore, many respondents could sense that their nurse managers were unable to display a sense of power and confidence. Many respondents saw their nurse managers *attempting* to display a sense of power and confidence, even though those displays seldom reached fruition. This variation in results contributes to the low reliability of the scale and the relatively high mean frequency.

Similarly, the Idealized Behavior factor was also marked by the least reliable item, "Considers the moral and ethical consequences of decisions." The consideration of moral and ethical dilemmas in the hospital setting was highlighted in the near-core category Multiple Realities. As nurse leaders make managerial decisions, they do so increasingly from the managerial perspective. Therefore, when acting as leaders, nurses may make decisions that are considered different from the morals and ethics of the nursing perspective. Hence the considerable variation in perceptions, resulting in low reliability and a relatively high mean frequency.

The Inspirational Motivation category was overall slightly more reliable in the nurse sample than the national survey. However, when considering the nurse respondent feedback on Inspirational Motivation statements such as "Articulates a compelling vision of the future," causes for inconsistent answers become apparent. "Vision" has been noted in the near-core category Repressing Leadership. Nurses have been identified as resisting change, though nursing literature widely acknowledges the importance of change in nursing. Nevertheless, so much resistance has led to a fragmented and weak vision.

Intellectual Stimulation had a low alpha coefficient of 0.58. A representative statement was "Seeks differing perspectives when solving problems." Qualitatively, a low reliability could be explained through the nursing culture, which is steeped in tradition and procedure. For example, the Report of the Ministerial Taskforce on Nursing (1998) noted that nursing is unable to move forward because of resistance within nursing, although nurse leaders are encouraging new perspectives and broader ways of looking at nursing practice. Nurses scored significantly higher than average in the Intellectual Stimulation subcategory than the national norms. This could be because there is a large push for nursing to become more innovative and open to change. However, the low reliability could reflect the inner conflict that each nurse experiences when making this change occur. Nurse respondents ideally want and see attempts to be innovative; however, the nursing and hospital culture inhibit Intellectual Stimulation. Again,

this variation in responses will generate low factor reliability and a relatively high mean frequency.

In common with Intellectual Stimulation, individualized consideration also had a very low alpha score of 0.46, although respondents also perceived that overall nurse leaders displayed a reasonably high level of individualized consideration. The category Repressing Leadership considered education and development in nursing. Situational factors such as high team leader workload and the nature of shiftwork mean that the team leader may not have the opportunity to spend time with individuals. Furthermore, education and development have been historically lacking in nursing. Nurses were historically seen to not need further education and consequently there have been limited opportunities for nurses to advance their careers in nursing. Interestingly, nurses considered their team leaders and colleagues to be very supportive. Consequently, many nurse managers attempt to be individually considerate, but are unable to do so because of the context in which they work. Therefore, some respondents perceive high frequency of display by their nurse managers and others perceive a low frequency. Once again, this variation in responses contributes to the low reliability and high mean frequency for Individualized Consideration.

Contingent Reward was less reliable in the nurse sample. Contingent Reward has been linked to transformational behaviors because it has yielded positive results similar to transformational behaviors. However, when individual items were considered, the least reliable item "Provides me with assistance in exchange for my efforts" highlights the difficulty team leaders have with their high workload. It may be impossible for a team leader to provide the level of assistance the respondent requires even though they may genuinely attempt to do so.

The Management-by-Exception (active) and (passive) subscales provided more reliable results. One reason for this could be that such transactional behaviors were traditionally supported in the nursing culture. Nursing practice is largely procedurally based and the Management-by-Exception factors support such a culture.

So far, the discussion has focused on specific questions as causes for lower reliability in the nurse sample of the MLQ. However, the basic social process of identifying paradox provides an overall account of the low reliability of some subscales. The paradoxical situations apparent in the organization lead to multiple ways of considering and interpreting questions. For example, one senior nurse leader described nurse resistance to change:

> They have a bit of an attitude problem. They're just not motivated, but by the end of the day they probably just don't have the energy left.

The paradoxical situation is that the respondent first suggests the resistance is largely attitudinal, however, she immediately acknowledges that nurses have no energy to change. The attribution of the respondent to the causes of resistance depend on whether the respondent considered the issue from a managerial or nursing perspective. This respondent attempted both and consequently left the researcher to question the degree to which attitude and energy were the cause of the perceived resistance. Such contextual factors and seemingly irresolvable circumstances are a major cause of confusion and concern for respondents.

The low reliabilities in some subscales of the MLQ serves to highlight the importance of contextual factors surrounding leadership. This case emphasizes the need for instruments and approaches that can more fully address such contextual issues. The complexity of leadership was further shown in the frustrations exhibited by some raters who wanted to qualify their questionnaire answers. These comments highlighted the situational limitations of the MLQ as a research instrument. Additional comments or incomplete questionnaires are routinely discarded or comments ignored by quantitative researchers seeking to maximize validity and reliability. However, these questionnaires provide valuable information, as the richness of these comments are potentially a source worthy of further investigation.

In the present study, eight respondents wrote N/A or "Not applicable" next to questions they felt were not relevant to the ratee or the situation. Further questionnaires were returned with some questions unanswered.

One respondent wrote that statement 15 ("Spends time teaching and coaching") is "not the focus of her position!" Subsequently the rater allocated the ratee the frequency of "Once in a while." However, this item corresponds to the transformational behavior of individualized consideration, the factor with the lowest reliability.

The importance of context was highlighted by a respondent who attached a note to her questionnaire stating, "Apologies, I cannot complete most of the questions—many do not have relevance to our situation." Though there were only a couple of questionnaire responses concerned with specific contextual issues, it may be considered neglectful of a researcher to ignore respondent concerns.

Another response indicated the importance of considering who was filling out the questionnaire. For example, a respondent who was a peer of the ratee wrote, " A lot of these questions are not appropriate for me to comment on as she [ratee] does not direct me in my line of work." Such comments should serve to alert the researcher to the limitations of using 360-degree feedback in which the questionnaires are identical for all levels of raters. A superior may have different perceptions and different relationships with the team leader ratee than a subordinate nurse.

Another respondent felt that questions about dealing with mistakes would cast an unnecessarily negative light on the leader. The respondent noted that "Questions relating to mistakes are difficult to rate when [the leader's] role often involves dealing with others' errors/mistakes." Bass and Avolio (1997) have said that jobs that are based on procedures may have higher management-by-exception results.

In general, comments written on returned MLQ forms highlighted respondent concerns with the limitations of the questionnaire, including misleading answers, irrelevant or inappropriate questions, and perceived negativity of the questions. The results of researchers discarding or overlooking respondent concerns lead to the heightened possibility of committing a Type III error—asking the wrong question. Even though only a minority of respondents wrote comments there may have been many more who had concerns. Another respondent noted wrote, "Your questions are very limiting. No space for comments." The call by this respondent for open-ended questions and comments remains in the qualitative arena but clearly has potential to be used as a part of future measures of leadership behavior.

EXPANDING THE SCOPE

The popularity of the 360-degree MLQ as a leadership assessment tool reflects our knowledge of leadership at present. However, if our understanding of leadership is to continue to develop, alternative research approaches must be considered.

This does not mean we must discard quantitative questionnaires such as the MLQ as being context-deficient and misleading. The present study highlighted both the traditional strengths and weaknesses of the MLQ as well as the usefulness of the questionnaire to enhance understanding of issues surrounding nurse leadership. It is important to note that the greatest gains in the present research came from considering the MLQ results from an alternative paradigm from that which the MLQ was derived. This allowed the researcher to consider results such as low reliability in a more productive light than the traditional quantitatively based framework allows. Rather than low reliability reflecting a poorly chosen sample, a poorly constructed questionnaire or some other factor that could not be controlled, it reflected the many alternative perspectives present in the organization.

The high transformational leader behavior scores of the nurse sample served to support the notion that nurses displayed "effective" leadership behaviors. However, when considered qualitatively, it lent strength to the concepts of Repressing Leadership and Multiple Realities as cultural factors overriding what are generally considered good leadership behaviors.

The potential for anomalous results such as low reliability and validity, outliers, incorrectly filled out questionnaires, and additional comments on questionnaires provide numerous creative avenues for researchers to explore. Such opportunities should be utilized for their potential insights and valuable directions for future research.

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CHAPTER 10

A STORY OF MISSED OPPORTUNITIES

Qualitative Methods for Leadership Research and Practice

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ABSTRACT

This chapter explores the role that qualitative methods must play in the leadership field—both in research and in practice. Its position is in sharp contrast to current trends in the field where quantitative methods have profoundly influenced how we study leadership and how we attempt to develop leadership capabilities. The products of such approaches—competency models of leadership and multirater feedback approaches—have encouraged the perception of leadership as a well-delineated, static, and, in many cases, universal set of dimensions. Both of these trends fail to capture the reality of leadership. For example, leadership requirements vary by organizational levels, and dynamic environments require leadership forms that differ from those characterized by greater stability. In the case of multirater feedback for leadership development, universal dimensions are applied to all levels and to all environments as if there were no contingency factors. These outcomes are to a large extent the product of the field's strong emphasis on survey and quantitative methods. If the leadership field is to successfully

adapt to an ever-changing world, we must therefore recognize the essential need for qualitative approaches.

This chapter explores the essential role that qualitative methods should and must play in the leadership field—both in research and in practice. Our position stands in sharp contrast to current trends in the field where quantitative methods have had a profound influence on how we study leadership and how we attempt to develop leadership capabilities. Specifically, behavioral competency models of leadership (e.g., Bass, 1985; Kouzes & Posner, 1987; Sashkin, 1988) and multirater feedback approaches have encouraged an almost singular focus on leadership as a well-delineated, static, and, in many cases, universal set of dimensions. We believe that these trends fail to capture the reality of leadership. For example, it is clear that leadership requirements vary by organizational levels (Yukl, 1994). In addition, dynamic environments require leadership forms that differ from those characterized by greater stability (Yukl, 1994). Moreover, there appear to be different forms of leadership (Nadler & Tushman, 1990) yet the majority of models fail to differentiate across dimensions such as these. A similar dilemma occurs with multirater feedback for leadership development. Here universal dimensions are applied to all levels and to all environments as if there were no contingency factors. We feel that such outcomes are largely the product of the field's strong emphasis on survey and quantitative methods. We believe that we have paid a significant price for the illusion of precision that these methods provide. Importantly, they have encouraged an emphasis on the status quo—in this case, on the existing models and conceptions of leadership. In other words, future studies simply further test and refine the underlying models of validated surveys. As a result, they become obstacles to paradigm shifts in our understanding of leadership.

If the leadership field is to keep pace with an ever-changing world, we must therefore recognize the essential need for qualitative research. In the long run, it will prove to be a far more informative and adaptive approach than those afforded by quantitative methods. In the sections to follow, we lay out our arguments as to why qualitative methods must play a central role in leadership research. Specifically, we will emphasize the fact that leadership as a phenomenon has certain attributes that are difficult to capture fully through quantitative methods—its dynamic character, its multiple levels, and its symbolic dimensions. We then turn our attention to the one of the most popular of leadership development tools: multirater feedback. A growing number of organizations apply the 360-degree format to increase managerial self-awareness (Waldman, Atwater, & Antonioni, 1998). In recent years this practice has become "nearly universal" among Fortune 500 companies (London & Smither, 1995). However, the extent of

its use still reflects "faith rather than proven validity" (Fletcher & Baldry, 1999, p. 163). When oversimplified and reduced to scales, it loses its power to provide rich data that reflect the complexity and the dynamic character of leadership, as well as its socially constructed nature. We strongly believe that the full potential of multisource feedback has not yet been utilized because its strength as a qualitative instrument has been neglected.

THE ESSENTIAL ROLE OF QUALITATIVE RESEARCH IN LEADERSHIP STUDIES

Qualitative studies have played a valuable role in the field of leadership. They have been responsible for paradigm shifts in our understanding, critical insights into poorly understood dimensions and into the role of context, and longitudinal perspectives that other methods have failed to capture (e.g., Bennis & Nanus, 1985; Conger, 1989; Isabella, 1990; Mintzberg, 1973; Roberts & Bradley, 1988). Yet despite their contributions, their role in leadership research remains remarkably limited. It is a paradox given that qualitative research should be the methodology of choice for topics as contextually rich and dynamic as leadership.

In part, the problem can be traced to a long-standing belief that qualitative research in the social sciences has its greatest role to play in the exploratory phases of investigating a topic area. In these situations, little is known about the subject to be investigated, and so hypotheses are purely speculative. The researcher's aim is to generate and explore as many hypotheses as possible about the phenomenon under study. Given the paucity of knowledge, it is considered premature to develop a survey questionnaire to "test" hypotheses about the phenomenon. Once a foundation of knowledge is established, quantitative analysis can then refine and validate with "empirical rigor" the hypotheses generated by earlier qualitative investigations.

This assumption that qualitative methodology is best suited to the early phases of an investigation must be seriously challenged in the leadership field. (Interestingly, in other fields such as decision making and strategic change, this assumption has been successfully challenged [e.g., Dutton & Dukerich, 1991; Eisenhardt & Bourgeois, 1988; Gersick, 1994].) Despite decades of research on leadership and thousands of survey studies (Bass, 1990), our knowledge in many dimensions of the phenomenon remains formative. For example, we know little about leadership requirements by organizational level. We know little about how leaders form their strategic visions. We know little about shared forms of leadership. In other words, leadership as a phenomenon cannot be conceived as a static, relatively simple event where research approaches can be applied in discrete phases. It is vastly more complex.

In conclusion, for the foreseeable future, there will be no moment where researchers will be able to say that we now have a complete and shared understanding of leadership. This is powerfully exemplified by the fact that after literally thousands of studies in the field, we have yet to develop "a general theory of leadership that explains all aspects of the process adequately" (Yukl, 1994, p. 19). Moreover, continual shifts in the environment create new demands for leadership that in turn require new behaviors on the part of leaders. For example, the Internet age appears to be creating a special class of challenges for leadership. Work today is done in virtual teams (Avolio, 2001; Spreitzer, 2001), and strategic visions are now shaped by broad competitive ecosystems (Moore, 1997). These shifts will challenge aspects of the recent generation of leadership models (e.g., Bass, 1985; Bennis & Nanus, 1985; Kouzes & Posner, 1987) that were built around assumptions of face-to-face contact and simpler competitive environments.

The complexity of leadership can be illustrated along three fundamental dimensions—each of which presents special challenges for quantitative research approaches. These include leadership's multiple levels of phenomena, its dynamic character, and its symbolic component. From the standpoint of multiple levels, we can conceive of leadership as embedded in "nests" of phenomena (Avolio & Bass, 1995): the intrapsychic, the behavioral, the interpersonal, the organizational, and the environmental. For example, there are environmental events that are shaping the leader's strategic choices while the presence or absence of certain organizational resources simultaneously constrains or facilitates the leader's choice of goals. At the same time, the leader is dependent upon subordinates or followers to achieve the goals they set forth. The leader's behaviors and interpersonal approaches determine how successfully they can align followers' actions to achieve shared goals. The leader is therefore both influencing individuals, their organization, and the environment, as well as being shaped by them.

Given this complexity of levels and forces, one of the great shortcomings of quantitative research has been its inability to draw effective links across these multiple levels to explain leadership events and outcomes (Avolio & Bass, 1995). Typically, quantitative approaches—largely survey-based in the leadership field—have focused on a single level of analysis such as the interaction between the leader and their subordinates (Yukl, 1994). Here the emphasis tends to be on observable behavioral dimensions and influence approaches. As a result, survey approaches typically overlook the influential role of intrapsychic, group, organizational, and environmental factors. Quantitative analysis is also poor at measuring interaction (Lantis, 1987)—a critical element of leadership—and tends to be unidirectional (for example, followers' perceptions of leader behavior).

This narrowness of the frame of investigation is one of the most serious flaws of a purely quantitative research approach. It simply reinforces false stereotypes that leadership is principally the product of a single individual or a dyad relationship with followers (Meindl, Ehrlich, & Dukerich, 1985). The richness of the leadership is lost, and entire levels of phenomena are overlooked.

In addition, there are the well-known criticisms that surveys may not even measure what researchers assume they are measuring—in this case, actual behaviors. For example, we know that surveys more often measure attitudes about behavior rather than genuine observed behavior and are influenced by the social desirability concerns of respondents (Phillips, 1973).

The problem is only further exaggerated by the nature of the descriptors used in survey-based quantitative research. Since they must be generalizable across a variety of contexts, they typically employ item descriptors that are broad terms. This type of terminology produces findings that are relatively "sterile" in the sense that a useful richness of detail is often missing. Instead, quantitative studies end up measuring the presence and frequency of static terms. Furthermore, their utility for managerial practice is limited because the details of the processes behind the descriptors are largely absent. For example, if we take a typical descriptor like "effectively communicates goals for the group," we learn little about the actual processes the leader used to communicate or the specifics of what they communicated or why their communications were effective relative to a specific context. We simply know that they were a good communicator in the eyes of respondents. Contextual factors and the implications for management practice are almost completely lost. Similarly, another commonplace descriptor like "envisioning the future" conveys little or nothing about actual time horizons, what types of information are needed to envision, how irrelevant information about the future is screened out, whether envisioning is a collaborative practice, and how such information about the future is communicated to others. All we learn is that these individuals "envision the future." To use an exaggerated analogy, it would be as if we asked a group of engineers to design an airplane and simply told them that all airplanes must have wings, a cockpit, and a fuselage. We then gave them practically no other information about the environment in which the aircraft would be traveling and what materials and resources were available. We also failed to share with them the detailed engineering blueprints from prior projects. While an exaggeration, the analogy is not that far removed from the reality of how we treat leadership today—a leader must be "sensitive to follower needs," "effectively set direction," "be aware of opportunities in the larger environment," and "be an inspirational communicator." How do these descriptors translate into actual activities within a given context to be undertaken by a specific individual in a leadership role?

In sum, most of these survey-generated leadership descriptors fail to help us understand the deeper structures of leadership phenomena. We trade off the "how" and "why" questions about leadership for highly abstracted concepts and descriptions, which allow us only to generalize across a range of contexts at relatively superficial levels (Pettigrew, 1990). They are like book covers that highlight in their titles an important discovery, yet they are missing the explanatory chapters within.

The dynamic nature of the leadership process also poses serious challenges for quantitative methods. We can think of this dynamism occurring along several fronts. There is the evolution of a leader's relations with followers and of a leader's actions within the larger environment over periods of time. Since organizational change is usually an integral part of the leadership process (Bennis & Nanus, 1985; Kotter, 1990; Tichy & Devanna, 1986), events such as achievements, failures, opportunities, and crises are constantly reshaping leadership experiences for both the leader and the led. For example, research has shown that the same individual may be perceived as a charismatic leader in one context but may not in another (Roberts, 1985; Roberts & Bradley, 1988). A quantitatively based survey might document this shift in perception, but as a methodology it is far less effective in identifying the specific contextual elements that have induced this fundamental shift in perceptions.

Another central problem facing the use of quantitative methods to measure any dynamic phenomenon such as leadership is that, by their nature, they measure only static moments in time. They cannot easily track in any richness of detail how events unfold or how leaders may shape interpretations of events. For example, surveys employed longitudinally face the challenge of new variables being introduced over time. Seeking consistency in survey results, the quantitative researcher may be reluctant to introduce and track these new factors in future surveys. In addition, survey methodology can promote a certain investigator detachment from the research site—to the point that researchers may simply be unaware of newly emerging factors. Qualitative methods, in contrast, demand far greater immersion in the research site and offer more opportunities to capture longitudinal perspectives in investigations—particularly if ethnographic methods such as participant observation are employed. In turn, they afford a high degree of flexibility to discern and explore the influence of newly emerging factors caused by individual and environmental changes.

The symbolic and subjective component of leadership also has important implications for research methods (Conger, 1989; Hunt, 1991; Morgan & Smircich, 1980; Pondy, Frost, Morgan, & Dandridge, 1983). As has been argued extensively, quantitative methods are designed largely to capture a reality that is composed of concrete and objective structures. They are far less effective in a subjective, ever-shifting reality where human

beings shape its creation. Yet the interpretative dimension plays a significant role in how leadership is defined and experienced. Attributions about outcomes are continually linked to "the leader" whereas in reality other factors play important or causal roles (Calder, 1977; Meindl et al., 1985). Impression management techniques employed by the leader may profoundly influence follower perceptions and distort realistic perceptions of the leader and the situation. Quantitative methods are far less effective at capturing these interpretative dimensions and seeing beyond them since they often assume that followers' and others' perceptions are accurate readings of a concrete, objective world. In contrast, as Morgan and Smircich (1980) point out, qualitative methods are ideally suited to such interpretative contexts:

> For if one recognizes that the social world constitutes some form of open-ended process...[where] human beings engage in symbolic modes of discourse, create their reality, and project themselves from the transcendental to more prosaic realms of experience....[Then] the requirement for effective research in these situations is clear: scientists can no longer remain as external observers, measuring what they see; they must move to investigate from within the subject of study and employ research techniques appropriate to that task...qualitative forms of investigation. (p. 498)

These three dimensions of leadership—multiple levels, dynamism, and social construction—make for a very complex research topic. As a result, the subject ultimately demands multiple research methods—regardless of the field's stage of maturity. It also demands teams of researchers with diverse methodological and discipline backgrounds rather than individual researchers or research teams with similar backgrounds. As we have argued, quantitative methods in and of themselves are insufficient on the grounds that they capture relatively unidimensional and static perspectives on leadership. On the other hand, qualitative methods, when properly employed, offer the leadership field several distinct advantages over quantitative methods: (1) more opportunities to explore leadership phenomena in significant depth and to do so longitudinally (Bryman, 1992); (2) the flexibility to discern and detect unexpected phenomena during the research (Lundberg, 1976); (3) an ability to investigate processes more effectively; (4) greater chances to explore and to be sensitive to contextual factors; and (5) more effective means to investigate symbolic dimensions (Morgan & Smircich, 1980). It is critical, however, that whenever qualitative methods are employed, multiple methods need to be used. This is essential to ensure "between-method triangulation" of the data and to capture different aspects of the reality being studied. Ideally, interviews would therefore be combined with observation, unobtrusive methods, life histories, and field experiments (Denzin, 1978). In this way, the shortcomings of

one method are balanced by the strengths of the other. As Webb (1966) notes:

> So long as one has only a single class of data collection, and that class is the questionnaire or interview, one has inadequate knowledge of the rival hypotheses grouped under the term "reactive measurement effects"...As long as the research strategy is based on a single measurement class, some flanks will be exposed...No single measurement class is perfect...When a hypothesis can survive the confrontation of a series of complementary methods of testing it contains a degree of validity unattainable by one tested within the more constricted framework of a single method. (pp. 173–174)

By relying solely on interviews as one's qualitative research strategy, researchers in the leadership field can fall into a similar trap as questionnaire survey researchers—dependence on a single method. In sum, it is imperative that we increasingly utilize observation and other qualitative strategies in conjunction with interviews to ensure not only between-method triangulation of data but also multiple perspectives on the leadership phenomena being studied.

In summary, qualitative approaches should be the methodology of first choice when conducting research on the topic of leadership. The nature of the topic demands a methodology that is sensitive to the dynamism and rich contextual character of leadership phenomena. We would also argue that qualitative approaches are not only appropriate for research on leadership but are as applicable to the world of practice—in other words, interventions in leadership development. Much like research on the topic, there have been strong trends to quantify leadership in management practice. We see this particularly in the area of feedback for development. Here multirater surveys have become the predominant means of helping managers and executives focus on their leadership development needs (Conger & Xin, 2000). Survey data is collected on various leadership dimensions using numerical ranking scales, which is then "fed back" to the individual. It is assumed that such quantifiable data allows the individual to have a precise sense of their strengths and weaknesses as a leader as well as an opportunity to compare themselves to others who have participated in the survey. In the section to follow, we argue that there have been important missed opportunities with the qualitative side of these surveys. Much like qualitative research, this dimension has been underappreciated and as a result underutilized. In addition, the quantitative dimension has its inherent shortcomings, which have largely been overlooked.

MULTIRATER FEEDBACK: THE OVERLOOKED ROLE OF QUALITATIVE DIMENSIONS

In the last decade, 360-degree feedback evolved from a "nice-to-have technique" to a "must-have-tool" (Church & Bracken, 1997). In order to solicit feedback about managers and leaders, organizations invert the pyramid and encourage target individuals at the top to ask lower echelons for guidance (Yammarino & Atwater, 1997). Information from relevant organizational others, like direct reports, peers, superiors, or customers, is fed back to the focal manager together with his or her self-ratings. The method is based on three basic assumptions (Tornow, 1993): (1) Self-awareness is enhanced when people know the discrepancies between how they see themselves and how others see them; (2) this increase in self-awareness leads to an increase of performance; and (3) multiple sources (observers) enhance self-awareness because they yield more reliable and valid information. The conclusion is that multisource feedback prompts behavioral change. Several empirical studies give evidence that the cognitive process of reflection does result in higher levels of self-awareness (Church, Javitch, & Burke, 1995; Church & Waclawski, 1996). For example, Hazucha, Hezlett, and Schneider (1993) report that 360-degree feedback is an effective management tool and that there is skill increase 2 years after receiving the multirater feedback. In addition, performance improvement as a result of 360-degree feedback seems to be sustained over a longer period of time (Reilly, Smither, & Vasilopoulos, 1996). However, others like Moses, Hollenbeck, and Sorcher (1993) claim it is just a popular fad, and Bernardin and Hagan (1995) found no support that 360-degree feedback necessarily improves performance. In a similar vein, Kluger and DeNisi (1996) argue that positive gains from feedback are questionable in some cases. One of the explanations for these contradictory findings could be the "dualistic" nature of the instrument as a quantitative and qualitative tool, with the consequence that its qualitative side gets somehow neglected. Even people sympathetic with 360-degree feedback have to admit that there are some fundamental problems with its design and application as a quantitative evaluative tool. Just driving the degrees in the label higher—90° (peer evaluation), 180° (upward feedback), 360° (upward, downward, lateral, and self-assessment), 400° and 540° (including friends and even family members)—won't help much, if we keep on twisting it and ignoring the benefits from its application as a qualitative instrument. Below we discuss some of the essential tradeoffs that have been made by relying on this instrument as a qualitative tool. In the process, we emphasize its potential as a qualitative intervention.

"Accuracy" versus Variation

The basic problem is how we view 360-degree feedback: whether we rely on it as a tool with psychometric properties or we focus on its qualitative richness. It is true that nowadays organizations try to measure everything and everyone and that being involved in some kind of measuring activity has become part of our organizational experience (Church, Rogelberg & Waclawski, 2000). In Tornow's (1993) opinion, there is a dissonance between the scientist's concern to increase the accuracy of 360-degree feedback as a measurement instrument and the practitioner's aim at rater variation. While the quantitative approach has a psychometric focus on measurement and considers it an "end," the qualitative one is more concerned with using 360-degree feedback as a "means to an end" (Tornow, 1993) and to *increase variation.*

The strength of 360-degree feedback is that information comes from unique perspectives because different constituencies provide rich data from their point of view. A single source covers a particular context, while multiple sources invoke different value systems as a result of their specific role in the organizational hierarchy (Salam, Cox, & Sims, 1997). However, the different sources might have asymmetrical goals. For example, superiors often rate "challenge to the status quo" and "encouraging independent action" as negatively related to performance, while subordinates find a positive link between them (Salam et al., 1997). In essence, raters consider more important those aspects of manager's behavior that directly affect them. This dependence of the perception on the eye of the beholder (Salam et al., 1997) inevitably leads to limited agreement among raters (Cardy & Dobbins, 1994). To illustrate, it is conceivable that a boss might not value delegation because it slows down action, but a direct report could be enthusiastic about it. Borman (1997) suggests that the organizational perspective of raters affects performance ratings. In other words, peers, direct reports, and bosses observe different aspects of the working situation, and therefore they focus their attention on different facets of employees' performance and attach different weights to them. A boss and a peer who witness how a manager defends the resource needs of her department at meetings might rate her behavior differently compared to a direct report who has no personal observations. However, this is not a problem if we view 360-degree feedback as a qualitative method. In this case, our intent is to capture and even increase rater variance and not to solicit like-minded opinions. The rationale is that differences in rater views reflect legitimate differences in the perceptions of the focal individual's various roles. Also, high discrepancy between the ratings of respondents might lead the target manager to the awareness that he or she interacts with employees in different ways, creating in- and out-groups.

Unfortunately, the reality behind the use of 360-degree feedback is different. Most often multirater feedback is conceptualized as a quantitative method that is driven by a wish to *minimize disagreements*. Consequently, its "validity" is mechanistically boosted by discarding all ratings that are more than 20% different from the rest of the raters or by sanctioning respondents who produce ratings inconsistent with others (see Edwards & Ewen, 1996). The notion that this "inaccuracy" is completely valid and represents "accuracy" is acceptable in the qualitative paradigm, but not in the quantitative one. Salam and colleagues (1997) argue that the goal of maximizing interrater agreements has historical roots, and it goes back to the epistemological assumption that there is an objective reality that has to be perceived and reported in a similar way. In other words, the more agreement, the more accurate. From this point of view, any disagreement is considered to be a rater error, and therefore it is undesirable.

Aggregation versus Patterns

If we don't take into consideration the interpretive component of the multisource feedback and discard the notion that discrepant data is a useful source of diagnostic information, we place a ceiling on the effectiveness of the instrument leaving the focal individual frustrated by the mixed messages he or she might get. This brings us to another caveat of using 360-degree feedback as a quantitative instrument: the aggregating of feedback from different sources. This practice makes it extremely difficult for the target individual to interpret the rich information. Yukl and Lepsinger (1995), for example, argue that if a manager consults peers frequently, but seldom direct reports, aggregated data will obscure the fact that he has a different approach to employees, depending on their position in the organization. Averaging conceals important variation (Fletcher & Baldry, 1999).

Differences in the raters' levels cause *method effects* (Conway, 1996), that is, bosses evaluate differently from peers, who assess differently from direct reports, and so on. To complicate things even more, interrater reliability for overall performance is different (Tsui & Ohlott, 1988; Viswesvaran, Schmidt, & Ones, 1996): for bosses it is .52, for peers .42, and for direct reports .26. As a result of a more structured training and experience, bosses share a more common frame of reference. This goes back to underlying cognitive processes and categorization mechanisms (Rosch, 1975). As decision makers, supervisors have to deal with diverse data. Due to limits on information capacity, they have to attend selectively to some emerging issues while ignoring others. Once their attention is focused, they label the issue, which in turn initiates the subsequent interpretation and informa-

tion processing. Educational programs teach managers how to label and interpret environmental signals, how to make sense of them, and how to react adequately. Models and concepts become collective knowledge, so that cognitive categories like "profitability," "threat," or "capability" elicit similar managerial responses. As a result, a shared professional culture emerges, similar to that of doctors or lawyers. Research shows that managers, for example, are more sensitive to information that suggests threat than opportunity (Jackson & Dutton, 1988). This threat bias is inconsistent with findings about the population that demonstrate that people usually fail to recognize threat (Turner, 1976). Obviously, managers have developed a special frame of categorization based on their experience and education. Another explanation could be the ecological argument. Managers who do not reflect objectively don't get promoted. Because of process and outcome accountability, managers learn early in their career to observe accurately and to craft their language. The labeling of their decisions is essential for competency-based trustworthiness (Elsbach & Elofson, 2000). Hence, managers are rewarded for being precise and for grounding their opinions in solid knowledge, which is widely shared in their professional community.

Moreover, groups of supervisors, peers, and direct reports seem to ground their assessments in different criteria.[1] The different socialization paths of organizational members strongly influence their expectations. In the last decade, the notion of the "learning organization" has become quite fashionable and probably all MBA programs and executive education modules emphasize its importance. Consequently, the degree of penetration and interiorization of the topic is different for groups of bosses, peers, and direct reports. The educational socialization of executives leads to a higher degree of isomorphism in their perception of content and process. While concepts like total quality management, reengineering, management, and transfer of knowledge, networking, and so on, make sense to them, direct reports might be far from fitting all pieces of information into a broader picture. Furthermore, research suggests that boss's ratings capture more of the employee's actual performance than the ratings from any other perspective and therefore can be considered to be the most valid (Scullen, Goff, & Mount, 2000). A possible explanation could be that bosses have the best access to information, and they are trained how to make use of it through formal and informal performance review sessions with subordinates.

In addition to the method effects, there is an *idiosyncratic rating tendency* of individual raters (Mount, Judge, Scullen, Sytsman, & Hezlett, 1998). This means that assessment from each rater, regardless of level, captures unique variance, and these are different enough to constitute a separate method. The implication is that information should be displayed sepa-

rately for each one of the raters (Mount et al., 1998). This will enable the focal individual to examine the patterns. The latter is of crucial importance when leaders try to determine their strengths and weaknesses. The widespread practice of aggregating ratings within or across rating levels is inappropriate because it reduces the construct validity of the ratings (Mount et al., 1998). The only exception is the level of supervisors where validity does not decrease as a result of aggregation.

These results should dim any enthusiasm to use 360-degree as a psychometric instrument since they clearly point to method and trait effects in multirater feedback. In fact, they should direct our attention to the potential of 360-degree feedback as a *qualitative* method of enhancing leadership skills. The following inference can be made: In order to draw conclusions on development needs of leaders, data analysis should move from the quantitative statistical comparison of averages and standard deviations to the discussion of response patterns, to the written comments and examples. This is supported by focus groups that have found rating scales not very helpful to understand others' expectations. Instead they strongly recommend descriptive comments (Antonioni, 1996). As Antonioni (1996, p. 28) argues, "written feedback is invaluable"; ratings from the instrument serve as a frame of reference, but written comments, especially when expectations are made explicit and when examples are provided, help leaders better understand work behaviors that have to be improved. Likewise, managers from medium-sized organizations studied by Waldman and colleagues (1998) found written feedback to be more valuable than numerical ratings. Throughout the year, raters kept a log of their observations, which made it possible to give rich written feedback to their leaders. It is interesting to note that raters do not fear giving written comments, since having three participants or more makes it already difficult to trace the source of specific comments (Antonioni, 1996; Waldman et al., 1998). Simple numbers on feedback are perceived as narrow and vague, and employees seem to prefer a narrative (Budman & Rice, 1994). Presenting numbers and computations often blunts the effectiveness because participants in 360-degree feedback groups focus primarily on comparing the averages instead of looking for patterns and messages. In this case, a tendency of setting uniform standards and norms for ratings achieved might emerge. A decade ago, when 360-degree feedback was still in its infancy, Meyer (1991) recommended eliminating numerical "grades" in multisource feedback. Experience demonstrates that he was right.

Concealing versus Revealing

Another limitation of the 360-degree instrument is that it is based on other people's observations and not on other people's *expectations*, which are situation specific and depend on the frame of reference (Moses et al., 1993). Survey items capture the major work-related factors. Quite often, they conceal the idiosyncrasy of the situation where some specific details of a manager's behavior might upset employees. It is not always an important issue that triggers negative feelings and the dissatisfaction of relevant organizational members. Open questions are very powerful in tapping sources of mismatch. Here are two vivid examples of how qualitative feedback reveals "blind spots":

> One boss thought he was a fabulous writer. His underlings suffered in silence as he routinely criticized their reports and corrected their grammar... At feedback time, they all mentioned that they thought he was a mediocre writer and wished he would quit bothering them. He was supremely embarrassed, apologized, and stopped. Another manager had two annoying habits. He stood too close to people, and little bits of spit flew from his mouth when he spoke. A very bad combination. [After receiving feedback] he began keeping his distance and got speech therapy, and his career prospects improved dramatically. (O'Reilly, 1994, p. 94)

Obviously, the underlying issues could never be discovered through a structured survey.

As discussed earlier, an additional problem with survey items is that they are broad descriptors, as illustrated through our second example. Let's compare what George, a partner at a leading law firm, learned about himself from the quantitative and qualitative part of his feedback (an actual case study). The survey covered four areas: strategic thinking, leadership, business development, and developing people. The statistical data suggested that his scores were quite good—between 1.5 and 2.3 (1 means respondents are very satisfied and 5 means they are very dissatisfied). According to the structured survey, George takes a long-term view, communicates vision, and recognizes the need for change. He is effective as a leader; accepts responsibility; protects the team; adjusts communication to the different levels; sets high standards; interacts in a sensitive manner; stays calm under pressure; demonstrates knowledge of clients, markets, and competitors; seeks synergy; motivates others; and is good at networking. Isn't this the picture of a perfect manager? There was only one item where he scored below 2.3, and this was the allocation of work among his assistants. During the group feedback session, George was often asked to share his experience and best practices. He seemed to be a little bit bored and disappointed that there was nothing new for him. This changed when

the qualitative part of his feedback was discussed. One of the comments revealed problems: "Needs to keep his cynicism under control. He is quick to suspect people's motives and may dismiss good ideas without sufficiently considering their merits. I think he doubts his own leadership abilities (unnecessarily) and will take the safe option to reduce the chances of being criticized. In a difficult market like Japan this conservatism significantly reduces his potential effectiveness." Nowhere in the structured feedback was his tendency to take the safe option and to avoid criticism reflected. Neither was there any hint about his inclination to dismiss ideas without analyzing them thoroughly. No matter how sophisticated the scales are, they can never give us the richness of information that the qualitative part that 360-degree feedback provides.

Exploring the nature of differences in perceptions can help leaders to better understand their interactions at the different organizational levels and abandon an unrealistic goal of pleasing everyone of their stakeholders. According to Goffee and Jones (2000), people do not want a perfect leader. Impressions of vulnerability are perceived as positive by creating an aura of approachability and humanity. Goffee and Jones suggest that if managers don't show some weakness, relevant respondents will invent one for them. The qualitative part of 360-degree feedback could be very instrumental in defining the idiosyncratic weaknesses of managers. A human resource manager, for example, got the following vivid description of one of her major problem areas:

> She is so busy and so involved with everything that she can appear remote and difficult to find/contact/talk to. She might benefit from slowing down a little. Analogy: Spacecraft in orbit around the Earth.
>
> **Question:** How do you make it orbit the Earth more quickly, go faster, right?
>
> **Answer:** Drop to a lower orbit, nearer the planet.
>
> **Question:** How can it be made to drop to a lower orbit?
>
> **Answer:** Slow down.

The analogy helped this manager to label her major weakness, and with a sense of self-irony, she joked with employees about her 'dropping to a lower orbit' each time she was under time pressure.

Written comments on 360-degree feedback can also assist leaders to learn in what ways they are different from the others and therefore to "capitalize on what's unique about themselves" (Goffee & Jones, 2000, p. 64). In order to communicate and exploit their "separateness" and "social distance," leaders have to be aware of their differences (Goffee & Jones, 2000, p. 64). Closed questions on 360-feedback cannot reveal those differences

that are more subtle and are not immediately apparent, but the qualitative part can. An IT manager, for example, learned that he "combines being a leader with being one of the boys" and a partner at a law firm was positively surprised when his direct reports said that "he is something of a rebel," which they regarded as a positive quality.

Furthermore, 360-degree feedback has an element of self-determination, since focus individuals decide on their own, with which aspects of the feedback to tackle and in what sequence (Mabey, 2001). Written comments of relevant organizational others help leaders in two ways. First, they give them evidence of which problems their constituencies consider the most important and urgent. Psychology of associations suggests that things that occur first to our mind are those that we consider important. Therefore, if a rater deals with a particular issue in his or her comments, he or she supposedly attaches special meaning and significance to it. Second, written comments help leaders to prioritize the tasks for their behavioral change. If structured feedback suggests that a supervisor has problems with communication, delegation, and knowledge management, while written comments reveal dissatisfaction mainly with his/her delegation, the target leader can infer that his or her delegation style (or lack of it) is priority number one for his or her action plan.

Leveraging the Potential of Multirater Feedback

As suggested earlier, the psychometric accuracy of 360-degree feedback is considerably restricted by leniency and harshness errors, central tendency, range restriction, halo effect, friendship bias, and so on. Since raters observe different facets of a focal individual's performance, they should be subgrouped according to their level in the organization and asked to provide information only on dimensions that are appropriate to their level (Furnham & Stringfield, 1998). Ambiguity of the instrument demotivates employees to give their opinion, hence it makes sense to apply alternative questions for the different levels of respondents (Kaplan, 1993). In order to guarantee relevant content and to align the instrument with rater's knowledge about the behavior of the target leader, the qualitative elements of 360-degree practice have to be emphasized.

In conclusion, we would like to suggest some guidelines for a more qualitatively based format for the 360-degree survey:

Input

- The 360-degree feedback instrument should be customized for direct reports, peers and bosses using different "master lists" with

behavioral descriptions that are relevant for the particular referent group. This approach suggests that raters can select items and individualize the survey (Westerman & Rosse, 1997). Subordinates, for example, would decide as a group on the content of the instrument they are going to use, and similarly with peers and bosses. Master lists, at the same time, should reflect the competency model of the company, for example, those sets of skills that have major impact on performance and are reinforced by other human resource activities, such as performance appraisals. When the new format of 360-degree system is introduced for the first time, the help of internal or external consultants might be needed. The "tailoring" of the feedback items has considerable advantages. First, participation in choosing feedback dimensions will increase employee's motivation to participate in the feedback. Ratees who will feel more confident in their ability to rate accurately and in their knowledge of focal managers' performance are more likely to participate in multisource feedback (Westerman & Rosse, 1997). Second, managers get the information that relevant organizational members consider important. This will help leaders prioritize goals in their action plans. Third, differences in the content of selected items can reveal to managers the contradictory expectations of different constituencies. For example, direct reports could select an item that suggests "the manager gives me the space and freedom to get on with my work," while the boss might choose "to centralize the decision making and increase the span of control." There is a psychological benefit to surfacing these contradictions. Managers are under pressure to "overplease" all their relevant organizational others. But as we have already pointed out, expectations are sometimes contradictory, and there is no single way for the leader to please everybody (Salam et al., 1997). It will be easier for managers to realize how unrealistic such a goal is, when they experience that direct reports, peers and bosses choose not only different but sometimes even contradictory scales as relevant. Finally, if raters choose out of master lists, the target individual will get a more realistic picture of their situation. This is especially true because sometimes items are included in questionnaires that are usually the socially desired forms of behavior, for example, "delegation" versus "increased control" rather than highly relevant to a particular context.

- An additional issue to consider in designing the master lists is the length of the survey. It should not lead to response fatigue. Employees who perceive the time necessary to fill in the feedback form as acceptable are more inclined to participate in multisource feedback (Westerman & Rosse, 1997). In general, people nowadays show

increasing resistance to surveys, and this trend will probably get worse. Therefore, the number of items in the quantitative part should be about 20 in order to prevent response fatigue. This would suggest that raters select between 3 and 5 items on 4 to 5 scales that they consider especially relevant.

Organization and Content

- The qualitative part should precede the closed questions. In the traditional form, the open questions are at the end, and there are two important reasons why we should instead place them at the beginning of the survey. First, it is necessary to minimize the effect of response fatigue on the quality of information. Open questions are of special importance, and raters should give them adequate attention and time. By coming at the end when respondent fatigue is setting in, raters give little thought and attention to qualitative questions. Second, asking the open questions at the beginning will make it possible to elicit employees' opinions without "priming" them through the closed questions.
- The open questions could be of different types. Some of them can be the conventional ones, for example: "What can your manager/peer do to make you more productive in your job?"; "How would you describe the areas of development for your manager/peer?"; or "What makes it difficult to work with your manager/peer?" Others, however, might be more creative: "Please give three positive and three negative adjectives that best describe your manager/peer, explain why, and give examples"; "If you had to characterize your manager/peer as an animal/food/color/object, which one would you choose and why?" The last question has strong traditions in projective psychological tests. Responses on these type of questions can provoke intensive self-reflection and can stimulate very interesting discussions.
- When it comes to the closed items, these should describe very specific behaviors. Descriptors like: "The manager is an effective communicator" is too general and ambiguous. Does it mean that the manager communicates effectively his company's overarching strategy and policies to his subordinates, or that he communicates the weekly tasks so that people know what is expected of them? The wording of the items should also emphasize more directly the relationship to the rater: "This manager delegates work to me" instead of: "This manager delegates work effectively." Employees are less likely to participate in multisource feedback if they consider the cri-

teria on the instrument to be irrelevant or ambiguous (Westerman & Rosse, 1997).

- For each item on the questionnaire, space should be provided for comments that explain and justify the numerical evaluation (see Ghorpade, 2000). This is a good opportunity to link the quantitative with the qualitative part.

Process

- Raters have to be trained to avoid errors and biases like leniency, harshness, central tendency, range restriction, halo effect, friendship bias, and so on. Open-ended comments need even more attention in terms of achieving constructiveness and an orientation on behaviors (Atwater & Waldman, 1998). Ratees also have to be trained in how to select respondents in order to leverage diversity, how to analyze the structured feedback and the comments, and how to develop a personal action plan.
- Interpretation of feedback data focuses on the comparison between self-ratings (on the different "tailored" surveys for direct reports, peers, and bosses) and those of respondents. However, there is no need to compare the averages of one manager with the averages of another (see DeNisi & Kluger, 2000). A coach can add a significant value in the sense-making process of the learning-oriented feedback and help with the action plan.
- Feedback is presented separately for each ratee group (e.g. peers, direct reports, etc.), avoiding aggregation of data (Yukl & Lepsinger, 1995). There should be more than three respondents in each category, so that anonymity is guaranteed (London & Smither, 1995). Raters who are accountable for their evaluations usually give higher ratings (Antonioni, 1996). Accountability refers to the implicit or explicit expectation that raters may have to justify their evaluations (Tetlock, 1992). Bosses are less concerned with confidentiality, since they give explicit evaluations during the annual performance appraisal.

In sum, the preceding analysis of 360-degree feedback suggests that it has been overemphasized as a quantitative instrument. As a result, its potential as a qualitative instrument has been largely neglected. If used primarily for its numeric scales, multirater feedback risks "the fate of eliminating judgment about people" (Hunt 1992, p. 226). A qualitative approach gets us much closer to the object.

CONCLUSION

It is time that scholars and practitioners in the leadership field turn their attention to leveraging the potential of qualitative research methodologies. As we have argued, qualitative approaches have in recent decades become a poor cousin to quantitative ones. Both research and practice have paid a significant price for this deference. As outlined above, we do believe that qualitative methods hold tremendous potential for deepening our understanding of leadership phenomenon and for developing more successfully the leadership potential of managers. Along with the steps that we have outlined above, we are hopeful that others will find more ways to harness qualitative methods to realize their rightful application to the field of leadership.

NOTE

1. This hypothesis is currently being tested with the feedback data of participants (managers in their mid-30s, with at least 8 years' managerial experience) in the Accelerated Development Program (ADP) at London Business School. ADP distributes a preprogram survey to subordinates, peers, and bosses of the focal managers. It comprises forty questions grouped around the following dimensions: accomplishing tasks, maintaining motivation, developing others, promoting innovation, providing leadership, and overall satisfaction.

   A factor analysis based on 572 multisource feedback questionnaires revealed substantial differences in the underlying evaluation factor structure of bosses, subordinates, and peers. Although these results are preliminary and the sample needs to be enlarged, this study supports the conclusion that there are major variations at the different levels. For direct reports two major factors emerged: the manager's sensitivity to employee's needs and the manager's competency to complete work on time (^{2} = 3.08, d.f. = 2, p value= 0.214, RMSEA = 0.038, GFI = 0.996, AGFI = 1.00, and NFI = 0.990). For peers, in addition to these two, a third factor was of great importance: the manager's performance appraisal skills, respectively his or her capability to give feedback (^{2} = 14.62, d.f. = 11, p value = 0.2004, GFI = 0.976, AGFI = 0.939, RMSEA = 0.044 ,and NFI = 0.965). The boss's factor structure was the most differentiated one and it comprised two more dimensions: the manager's technical competence and skills to transfer knowledge and experience to others (^{2} = 27.41, d.f. = 23, p value = 0.2387, AGFI = 0.878, CFI = 0.956, RMSEA = 0.043, and NFI = 0.848).

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CHAPTER 11

MODELS, METHODS, AND TRIANGULATION

Researching the Social Processes in Our Societies

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This chapter provides some commentary on each of the other chapters and attempts to synthesize some of the messages and implications contained therein. In doing so, it also presents some new material produced recently by the chapter authors. The chapters in this book give insights into the conceptualization of leadership and associated organizational processes. Some chapters outline the actual research that has been conducted into these processes. They also draw conclusions about methodologies best suited to providing insights into these processes. We attempt to draw together these conclusions and insights.

THE NATURE OF THE BEAST

Micha Popper tells us that leadership is a type of relationship, and not just the interplay between leader, follower, and circumstance. Grounded theory

is a research method that reflects and gains insight into that "leadership as relationship" paradigm, rather than the "leadership as cognition" paradigm. This chapter is interestingly connected to several other chapters in the book. In focusing on the relational aspects of leadership, there is a point of contact with Ropo and colleagues' chapter that also emphasizes the relational aspect of leadership, though from a completely different perspective. Here, Ropo is interested in, as several other authors are, the possibilities of grounded theory to redress some of the limits of traditional leadership discourses and as an antidote to the biases that have been promulgated via the mainstream extant methodologies. While other chapters used grounded theory to discover nuances of leadership processes, as they are revealed in local context and circumstances, Popper sees the possibilities of grounded theory for moving us out of the biased nuances we have inherited from the more traditional research paradigms. It seems he is arguing that instead of zooming in for details using quantitative approaches, we should use grounded theory for zooming out—to begin with a new conceptual base, founded on a leadership-as-relationship paradigm.

Ropo and colleagues also take perspectives on leadership that are alternatives to the conventional wisdoms and ontological orthodoxies. The authors argue that the study, and ultimately the practice, of leadership is impoverished by an underdeveloped aesthetic perspective. Such a focus of inquiry would augment intellectual knowledge regarding leadership issues and processes with a theory based on sensual knowledge and beauty. An aesthetic movement in the general study of organization and management represented one reaction to the rational, positivist paradigms that dominate the field. A lightly aesthetic perspective on leadership has developed around the metaphor of "leader as artist." In that vein, the "leader as conductor, the organization as an orchestra" metaphor has been extremely popular, with several celebrity conductors of famous philharmonic orchestras offering leadership development books and workshops in recent years (see, e.g., Zander & Zander, 2000).

However, Ropo calls for a deeper exploration of an aesthetic dimension to leadership, and the chapter begins a discussion toward that end. In identifying and contrasting a beauty of geometry and a beauty of the living body, Ropo makes a separation between the rational, objective, and hierarchical aspects of leadership versus the more subjective, social, and relational aspect. In emphasizing a bodily aesthetic, Ropo opens the door for a new leadership paradigm, based on a discourse that emphasizes lateral social influence processes. Ropo makes a case that bodily knowledge is a leadership competency that is especially relevant in domains where professionals are not inclined to accept hierarchical forms of leadership.

The authors do not eschew our existing knowledge of leadership nor the methodologies that gave it birth. Rather, they suggest augmenting that

knowledge with an aesthetic perspective on leadership (and other organizational social processes for that matter). They see the leader as an artist. They see the leader as a conductor of an orchestra. Such a perspective resonates with the complementary approaches to the dramatistic genre in organizational research whereby leadership is not just *like* conducting an orchestra; rather, leadership *is* conducting an orchestra. Also, the leadership and the orchestra depend on one another, and we know leadership by "knowing" the orchestra (Jackson, 2001; Mangham, 1990). After all, to continue the orchestral metaphor,

- the leader knows the musical style
- the leader knows the particular piece that is being played
- the leader can play many of the instruments, although not actually playing them while conducting
- leaders and followers make the piece work for some common goal, for the aesthetic benefit of the audience, for the society, and not *just* for the income that their music derives
- followers can step in and be leaders
- the leader is doing more than just hearing music and directing other musicians

In this there is an interesting connection to the Gordon chapter. It may well be that as a postmodern logic of organization takes hold, a new culture of authority is indeed created based around tacit, bodily knowledge, with an emphasis on lateral relationships and social presence. Bodily competencies such as listening will increase in importance. Gordon takes our perspective further by drawing attention to problematic contradictions inherent within attempting to disperse leadership by (only) dispersing overt power and formal structures.

New models of leadership attempt to eradicate the connection between hierarchical rank and authority on the one side, and leadership influence on the other. The idea is that leadership is not to be confounded or equated with hierarchical position, but a process of influence on self and others that can and should occur anywhere, and at any level, in the structure of the organization. This is a democratized, more expansive view of leadership, moving it outside of the purview of a few high-ranking officials, and disseminating it as a feasible, even necessary aspect of one's conduct, no matter how far removed from the executive suites and strategic apex of the organization one's exertions take place. The new leadership model of concern to Gordon is well captured by Spreitzer and Quinn (2001) who have asserted that the best companies create within themselves a *company of leaders*—an organization in which employees at every level take initiative and act as owners of the firm. This is done, they say, by creating an environment in which people are empowered. Once again, though, the rhetoric of the organization says that people are empowered, but do the deep structures really reflect that?

Committing to a dispersion model of leadership involves an acceptance not only of the concept that leadership can be dispersed, but also a movement away from orthodox views of discretionary power and its distribution in the organization. Gordon addresses the often-dissonant relationship that exists between status quo power structures and new paradigms of dispersed leadership. His observations from the field suggest that surface adoptions and espousals of dispersed leadership models often occur without concomitant changes to the deep power structures within an organization. This breeds a hypocrisy of policies logically aligned to a new leadership ideology and behavior nevertheless constrained by historical codes of social order. Thus, people are caught between what Hirschorn (1997) calls an old and new "culture of authority." Gordon's observations highlight that the new culture does not yet exist in many cases, but must emerge within the context of existing power structures.

There is a deeper base of human cognition at work than these overt changes can tap into. It is these tensions and paradoxes that can only be tapped by an inductive theory-building process of inquiry. Gordon recognizes, as Popper does, that power differentials are there, whether we formally "disperse" them or not.

The tensions Gordon explicates shed some light on the struggles that are precipitated by the transition from modern to postmodern organizational arrangements, which have at their core problems of leading and following. It is interesting to speculate about the eventual resolution of such tensions and issues. One possibility is that dispersed leadership and empowerment remain mostly a fiction against an unmoving substrate of orthodox power structures. Researchers will ask, "Will a new politics emerge to help people manage and navigate the gaps that are created?" and "Can real change occur; will the initial dissonance resolve itself as older power codes drop away in the face the creation of newer cultures of authority?" Therefore, one could ask, "Is one task of leadership, within the existing centralized power structure, as it seeks to disperse leadership and create a 'company of leaders,' the modification of codes of order and cultures of authority?"

Dunford provides some methodological insights into researching these phenomena. Although the phenomenon in question is organizational downsizing, the methodology can be quite ubiquitous. In particular, the general approach to the research can be to study the language used by the players in the organizational phenomenon, whether that phenomenon is leadership, downsizing, succession, or any other organizational process. Content analysis can quantify and make sense of the typologies of metaphors used by actors in organizations, and the trends in their use over time. Conger and Toegel show more formally how these metaphors can be

used to probe into the minds of the players in the social phenomenon under investigation.

CONCURRENT GROUNDING AND MODELING

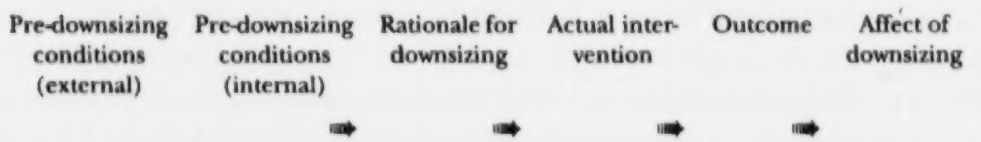
The grounded theory method gives a framework for interpreting these metaphors. These metaphors can, in turn, be dimensionalized and modeled. Lets work through a possible example:

Step 1: Storytelling

Ask respondents (interviewees, in particular) to tell a story—about downsizing, about leadership, about whatever is the phenomenon under investigation. Let's say, for the purpose of this example, that the story is about downsizing. Downsizing is a phenomenon familiar to the reader after having read Dunford's chapter. It is also a leadership challenge faced by managers in organizations, even though the terminology is now out of fashion. However, the research story can be about any organizational challenge.

Step 2: Coding

The stories would have stages to them. Every story is a sequence of events. We will continue the downsizing theme. Our downsizing stories might have these general stages. These stages would emerge from the open coding of the transcribed stories as provided by the storytellers. So, for example, the stages in the story might be:



We are not preempting that these would be the stages that emerged from the coding of the interviews. We are using them as an example. Some downsizing stories might have all these stages. Some might have less. Others might have some alternate variables included. However, let's say that these stages are represented. The coding of each stage might identify that each stage had the following properties. These properties are the meta-

phors used by the storytellers to make sense to the listener of the story they are conveying:

Pre-downsizing conditions (external)	*Pre-downsizing conditions (internal)*	*Rationale for downsizing*	*Actual intervention*	*Outcome*	*Affect of downsizing*
Meteorological	Body	A diet/lose weight	A weight	Success	Positive affect
		B improve health	B health		
Military	Medical	C add weight	C military	Failure	Neutral affect
		D horticultural			Negative affect

Step 3: Dimensionalizing

In the grounded theory method, properties have dimensions. Therefore, each property of each category could be dimensionalized. For example, for every story told by the storytellers,

- internal and external conditions and rationales can really only be dimensionalized on a nominal scale (yes or no); in other words, we are determining whether or not these categories were present in the story
- interventions can be dimensionalized according to the level of emphasis apparently placed on each intervention; strong emphasis can be coded as "3," moderate emphasis can be coded as "2," and weak emphasis can be coded as "1," which constitutes ordinal level data
- outcomes can be dimensionalized from highly successful (coded "+2") through to extreme failure (coded "–2"); again, these are ordinal level data
- affect can be dimensionalized as positive (coded "+1"), neutral (coded "zero"), or negative affect (coded "–1"); ordinal data again

Thus, by dimensionalizing and quantifying those dimensions, a story can be plotted and modeled. Note that rationales and interventions are nominated alphabetically. This allows the researcher to distinguish between the model being plotted for the "diet/weight loss" rationale (A), the "improve health" rationale (B), the "add weight" rationale (C), and the "horticultural" rationale (D). The researcher can see, for example, how many of the "improve health" rationales led to each of the three actual interventions, the success rates of the interventions, and the effect generated. By having numerical data, the researcher is able to consider structural equation models with multiple dependent variables.

Step 4: Modeling

Models can now be plotted for multiple stories. For each external condition, the general "story" can be told of which internal conditions were perceived, which rationale led to which intervention, which was either a success or a failure, and which had a certain affective impact on people. For example, story (1) might be that military external conditions might have matched medical internal conditions; in which case the rationale for downsizing might have been to diet or lose weight more than to improve health. This led to heavy emphasis on health interventions, moderate emphasis on military interventions and weak emphasis on weight interventions. The outcome was failure and negative affect. Story (2) might be meteorological and body conditions led to a horticultural rationale, which preempted a strong emphasis on both weight and military interventions, which led to success, but still had a negative affect.

Step 5: Structural Modeling

Because we have quantified the properties of each stage, we can model the various flows, see which model fits the data the best, and look for similarity or difference between models. It could be that only stories (1) and (2) had goodness-of-fit indices greater than 0.9, and that the data did not fit other stories adequately. Of the two adequately fitting stories, story (2) had the best fit with the data and that it was statistically distinct from story (1). The implications for such insights might result in new ways that management can articulate their strategies and ways that they can monitor the effect they are having through the language used in the workplace to discuss the intervention.

In the above way, we have applied the grounded theory method of dimensionalizing to the quantitative structural equation methodology (SEM). We have achieved data triangulation in that qualitative data has been dimensionalized numerically. We have achieved methodological triangulation in that we have implemented the principles of the grounded theory method (open coding, theoretical coding, determining properties, dimensionalizing properties) as well as the data modeling that structural equation modeling allows.

MODELING OF GROUNDED THEORIES

Another way to integrate methodologies is to use SEM methodology to replicate the hierarchies of abstraction provided by the grounded theory method. Parry (in press) was able to operationalize psychometrically the

hierarchies of abstraction provided by three extant grounded theories of leadership and one other social process of leadership drawn from the extant literature.

Social Processes of Leadership

The full grounded theory method provides as its penultimate outcome a basic social process (BSP) explaining the phenomenon under investigation. Thus, when leadership is the phenomenon, the BSP is a social process of leadership (SPL). As a means of replication and validation rather than triangulation, Parry (in press) translated the detailed write-ups of four SPLs into questionnaire format in order to psychometrically validate the findings of the grounded theory work. Three of those SPLs emerged from the full grounded theory method, and the fourth was a social process that has emerged consistently in the extant leadership literature, and is generally considered to be a process that is axiomatic of leadership. That process is *promulgating vision*. The three grounded theory-derived SPLs that were subject to psychometric validation were *optimizing* (Irurita, 1994, 1996), *resolving uncertainty*, and *enhancing adaptability* (Parry, 1999). These grounded theories are important and useful because they have begun to look at leadership as a dynamic social process that (a) involves the transformation of beliefs, actions, and motivations over time and (b) involves interactional linkages between a range of variables and individuals at many different levels (Proctor & Parry, 1999). Promulgating vision was included as a control process.

Optimizing

Irurita (1996) conducted a qualitative analysis of nursing leadership using the grounded theory method. From data collected over 4 years, Irurita proposed a theory of optimizing. Optimizing is a term given to the effective leadership process of "making the best of the situation, making the most effective or optimal use of all available and potential resources to compensate for the state of retardation and to move beyond mediocrity toward excellence" (p. 129).

Optimizing involves three progressive phases of process, where an organization may be in a period of *surviving*, *investing*, or *transforming* (Irurita, 1996). The transforming phase takes the organization from retardation and mediocrity in which basic survival is the focus, through turbulence, in which investing is key, and on toward excellence, a period of continuous development and transformation (Irurita, 1996). Figure 11.1 shows the three phases of the process of optimizing as three latent constructs of the higher order construct of optimizing.

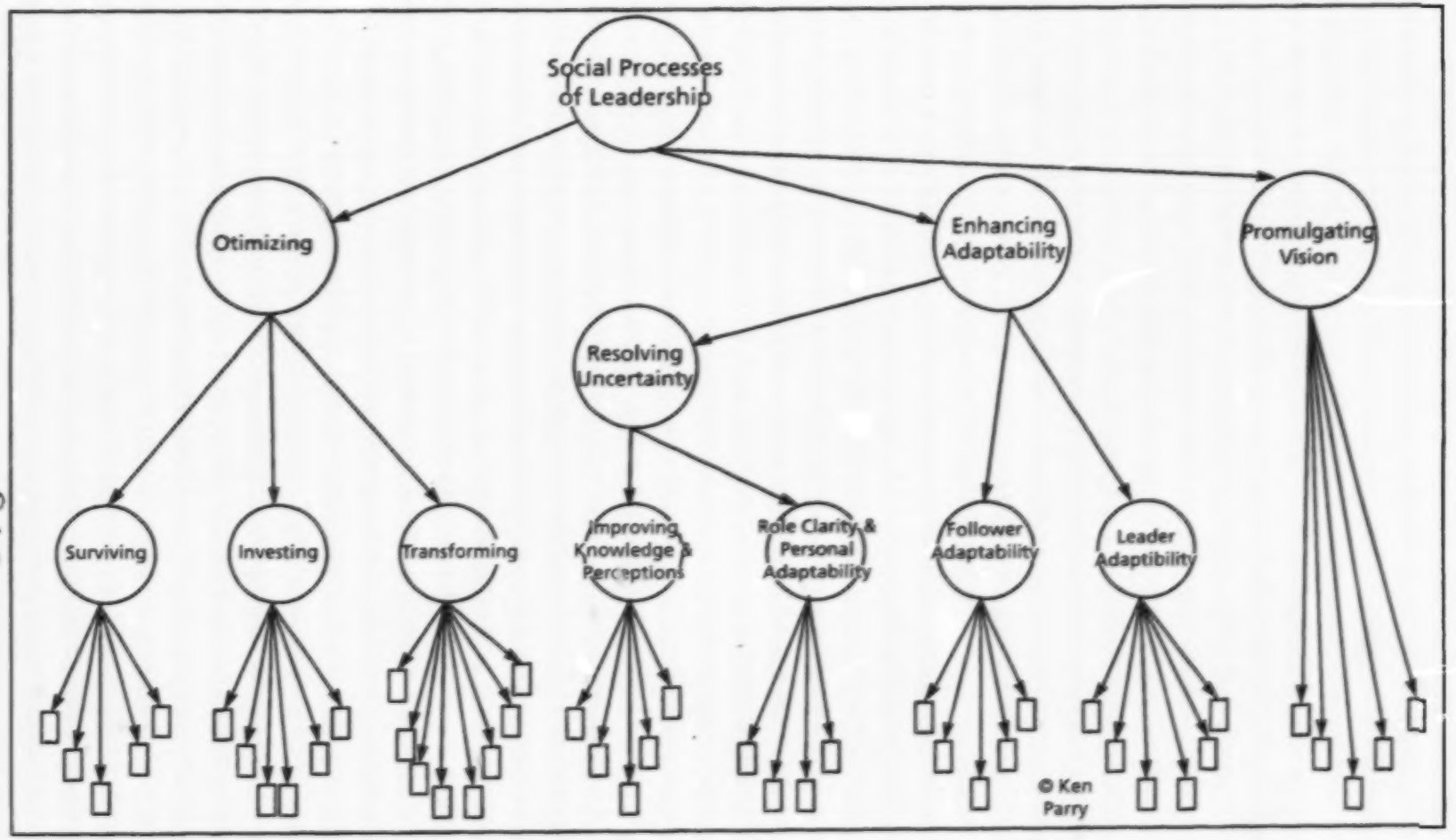


Figure 11.1 Grounded Conceptual Hierarchy being Tested

Parry (1999) also used qualitative data and the full grounded theory method to explore the leadership processes occurring amidst turbulent change in Australian local government settings. Through this work, two social processes were found to occur in relation to leadership, change, and following. These social processes involve *resolving uncertainty* and *enhancing* the *adaptability* of followers and leaders in organizations.

Resolving Uncertainty

Parry (1999) found that where effective leadership process was present, the uncertainty of change of both the followers and leaders could be resolved through strategies, behaviors, and activities demonstrated by the leaders. Moreover, in the absence of effective leadership, both leaders and followers can become consumed with uncertainty, and their knowledge, performance, and morale may be reduced while inaccurate perceptions are maintained. Within the process of resolving uncertainty it is important for the leader to have a clear understanding of their leadership role. Leaders' self-awareness of personal adaptability helps them to be in a position to help increase the adaptability of their followers through strategies such as identifying positive outcomes of the change and giving followers experience of success through the change. Therefore, the two characteristics of the social process of resolving uncertainty, at a lower level of abstraction, are (a) improving knowledge and perceptions and (b) role clarity and personal adaptability. Figure 11.1 represents these two characteristics as lower order latent constructs of the higher order construct of resolving uncertainty.

Enhancing Adaptability

Through deeper theoretical coding of the data, Parry (1999) identified some key strategies of enhancing adaptability that resolving uncertainty lacked. In order to enhance followers' adaptability and their own adaptability, leaders can influence change in their follower's perceptions, create reciprocal commitment, improve knowledge of reciprocal benefits of changes, consistently and clearly communicate desirable messages, facilitate experiences of different change situations for followers, and achieve complementarity of values (Parry, 1999). In Figure 11.1, follower adaptability and leader adaptability are represented as lower order latent constructs of the higher order construct of enhancing adaptability.

Promulgating Vision

In contrast to the three grounded theory-derived social processes above, the social process of promulgating vision was derived from extant literature rather than from grounded theory research specifically. Nevertheless, it is relevant to this study in that it fulfills each of the criteria for a social process

of leadership, that is, change and transformation over time, the linking of interactional sequences, and human relation dynamics (Parry, 1998).

The term "vision" is used to describe "a view of a realistic, credible, attractive future of an organization, a condition that is better in some important ways than now exists" (Bennis & Nanus, 1985, p. 89), has been at the forefront of much leadership literature in past years (Bryman, 1992). Vision has been related to many positive outcomes, including enhancing commitment and energy in people, creating meaning in worker's lives, establishing a standard of excellence, and bridging the present with the future (Nanus, 1992).

However, if visioning is to be seen as a social process, it is not adequate to simply create a vision. The vision must be meaningfully communicated between the leader and their followers. In other words, *promulgation of vision* must occur. Promulgating vision means that leaders must meaningfully articulate and communicate the vision (Conger, 1992), while also taking care to "live their vision" (Rowsell & Tony, 1993). Therefore, like the core social processes of trust, developing relationships, and communicating effectively, a leader promulgating vision must have some degree of behavioral integrity in which their actions match their words (Simons, 1999).

From these literatures, five items were determined that reflected the SPL of "promulgating vision." In Figure 11.1, those five items are represented as the manifest variables of the higher order latent construct of promulgating vision. Figure 11.1 reflects the conceptual model that was tested with confirmatory factor analysis and structural equation modeling. Note that resolving uncertainty is represented as a high-order social process of leadership, and that it is also a subconstruct of the basic social process of enhancing adaptability.

All four of these social processes of leadership are conceptually similar to transformational leadership. However, this similarity has not been determined other than conceptually and theoretically.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

By converting the findings from these four social processes of leadership (three determined via the full grounded theory method) into a questionnaire, we attempted to achieve the following four outcomes:

1. To validate extant SPL work that has been undertaken using the grounded theory method.
2. To test for the presence of discrete subconstructs at lower levels of abstraction.

3. To determine relationships between existing leadership/organizational constructs and SPL theory.
4. To engage in structural equation modeling to ascertain whether a psychometric hierarchy of abstraction could be constructed that reflected the hierarchies of abstraction contained within the grounded theories.

Ultimately, 44 items were selected to represent the four social processes of leadership under investigation.

SAMPLE AND PROCEDURE

Data were collected from middle and senior managers drawn from the membership of the New Zealand Institute of Management. The surveys required raters to evaluate leadership processes and behaviors within their "team" or "work unit."

Public and private sectors were approximately equally represented, and all industries were represented. Two-thirds of respondents were men. This was as generalized a list of "managers" around the country as one could obtain. Scale development and sampling are elaborated in Parry (in press).

MEASURES

Many scales measure conceptually similar organizational processes that contribute to leadership. We chose to use the following:

- *Transformational and Constructive Transactional Leadership* (Bass & Avolio, 1993; Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Moorman, & Fetter, 1990).
- *Climate for Innovation* (Scott & Bruce, 1994).
- *Humor* (Dubinsky, Yammarino, & Jolson, 1995).
- *Organizational Citizenship* (Podsakoff et al., 1990).
- *Cohesion* (Carless & DePaola, 2000)
- *Trustworthiness* (Pearce, Branyiczki, & Bakacsi, 1994).

Questions were also asked about the demographic characteristics of respondents and their work units.

RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

Exploratory Factor-Analysis

Exploratory factor analysis suggested a four-factor solution. However, one factor consisted of all eight reverse-coded items, suggesting a systematic bias owing to the presence of those reverse-coded items. For this reason all eight reverse-scored items were withdrawn from further analyses. That left 36 items. The remaining three factors reflected the three social processes only very approximately.

Confirmatory Factor-Analysis

Comparison of models was undertaken using the AMOS 4.0 Structural Equation Modeling procedure (Arbuckle & Wothke, 1999) in SPSS 10. We ran a CFA of the theoretically derived four-factor structure, representing the three grounded theory-derived social processes of leadership plus promulgating vision.

This four-factor model did not produce a model of adequate fit. However, by removing items that loaded on multiple factors, and that did not load adequately on any factor, we reduced the sample down to 20 items, which reflected the three grounded theory-derived social processes. The remaining promulgating vision variables all loaded onto multiple factors concurrently. This finding meant that they had to be removed as a discreet factor, but it did confirm the finding from the extant literature that the promulgation of vision is a ubiquitous concept, common to all the processes of leadership. Certainly, in this case, it is common to optimizing, enhancing adaptability, and resolving uncertainty. With a reduced list of 20 items, the three-factor proposed model was confirmed, with goodness-of-fit indices in the range .91–.92 (see Parry, in press).

Hierarchical Model Solution

Figure 11.2 represents a hierarchical model that indicates the presence of the three social processes as higher order constructs, and five lower order categories. Fit indices are also indicated in Figure 11.2. Those fit indices are actually better than the simple three-factor solution. By constraining error variances on this model to zero, potential problems with multicollinearity were offset. This practice added rigor to the resultant model. It also helped to reduce the impact of same-source bias. All the resultant factors correlated significantly and positively with the other pro-

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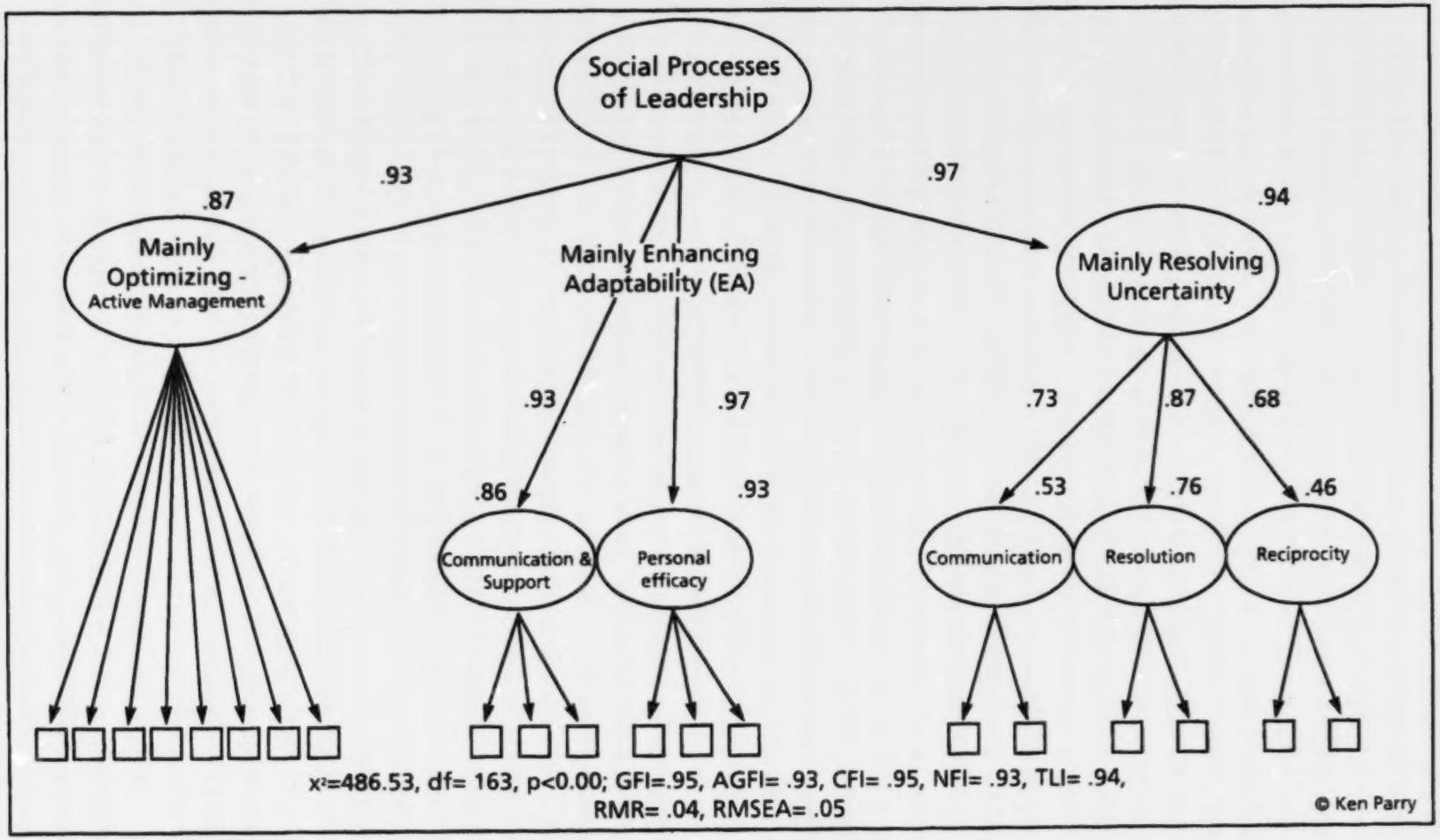

Figure 11.2 Psycometric conceptual hierarchy.

cess constructs of transformational leadership, climate for innovation, humor, organizational citizenship, cohesion, and trustworthiness. These correlations indicated the convergent validity of the latent constructs represented in Figure 11.2.

We found high positive correlations between transformational leadership and the SPL constructs. Bass and Avolio's (1993) and Podsakoff and colleagues' (1990) transformational constructs all correlated with the SPL constructs between $r = .52$ and .81. This finding supports conceptual overlaps described in the original SPL theories between transformational leadership and optimizing, resolving uncertainty, and enhancing adaptability (Irurita, 1996; Parry, 1999). Due to the conceptual and empirical similarity between SPL and transformational leadership, it may be that practitioners can use transformational leadership as a measure of the presence of desirable social processes of leadership within organizations. However, this proposition must be subject to further analysis before it can be accepted.

IMPLICATIONS OF HIERARCHY OF ABSTRACTION MODELING

The results provide psychometric support for the three social processes of leadership that reflect optimizing, enhancing adaptability, and resolving uncertainty. The factor with the clearest match to the original theory was resolving uncertainty. However, in contrast to the original theory, resolving uncertainty was found to be distinct from enhancing adaptability. Optimizing and enhancing adaptability were theorized *a priori* to have considerable conceptual overlap, particularly where they converged on existing leadership theory. This final solution represented this overlap. For example, active management was predominantly made up of optimizing processes but also included two enhancing adaptability items. Similarly, an optimizing item was included in one of the derived enhancing adaptability factors.

Enhancing adaptability could not be isolated on the psychometric conceptual hierarchy of abstraction model (Figure 11.2) as a discrete higher-order latent construct. However, the two lower-order constructs of "communication and support" and "personal efficacy" both reflected enhancing adaptability, and both could be isolated on the hierarchy of abstraction model. The discreteness of these two factors provides support for the distinct presence of the latent construct representing "enhancing adaptability." The reason that enhancing adaptability could not be isolated on the hierarchy of abstraction model is that it correlates highly with the optimizing construct ("active management") and with resolving uncertainty. Rather than seeing this as a methodological problem, we see it as further

confirmation of the conceptual similarity between these constructs. Similarly, the subconstructs of "optimizing" could not be isolated. Again, this was because of the highly correlated nature of the manifest variables reflecting these latent constructs.

The terminology for the lower order latent constructs in Figure 11.2 is different from those proposed in the grounded conceptual hierarchy that was originally tested. This is because there are fewer items remaining within each latent construct in the psychometric conceptual hierarchy than were proposed in the grounded conceptual hierarchy. For example, the three items that remain in "personal efficacy" reflect that title more so than they reflect "follower adaptability" or "leader adaptability." However, "personal efficacy" is just as accurate a representation of the discrete lower order construct that has resulted from this analysis, as "leader adaptability" and "follower adaptability" are of the conceptually similar constructs that emerged from the grounded theory research.

In general there is support for the continued investigation of leadership through grounded theory-based work. Moreover, the successive and progressive analysis of the social processes of leadership within quantitative *and* qualitative investigations is likely to provide a promising avenue for the development and testing of comprehensive and valid leadership theory. Finally, there is psychometric support for the hierarchy of abstraction that is so much a part of the grounded theory method. Consequently, hierarchy of abstraction modeling may provide a rich source of insight for future researchers, whether using an ideographic approach and qualitative methods like grounded theory, or whether using the nomothetic approach characterized by mainstream quantitative methods.

HIERARCHY OF ABSTRACTION FOR TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP

Figure 11.3 represents another hierarchy of abstraction model. This is the model for Bass and Avolio's transformational–transactional leadership construct. Many models were tested, reflecting different combinations of factors to illustrate higher order constructs such as a five-factor transformational construct, a four-factor transactional leadership construct, active–corrective leadership, passive–corrective leadership, constructive transaction, and corrective transaction. Most of these combinations are discussed in Avolio, Bass, and Jung (1999). Of all these various conceptualizations of the transformational–transactional dichotomy, Figure 11.3 represents the model of best fit. Note that the fit indices are in the range .86–.88. This is marginally below the cutoff for adequate fit, but it the best fit of all the hierarchies of abstraction that were tested. Consequently, the

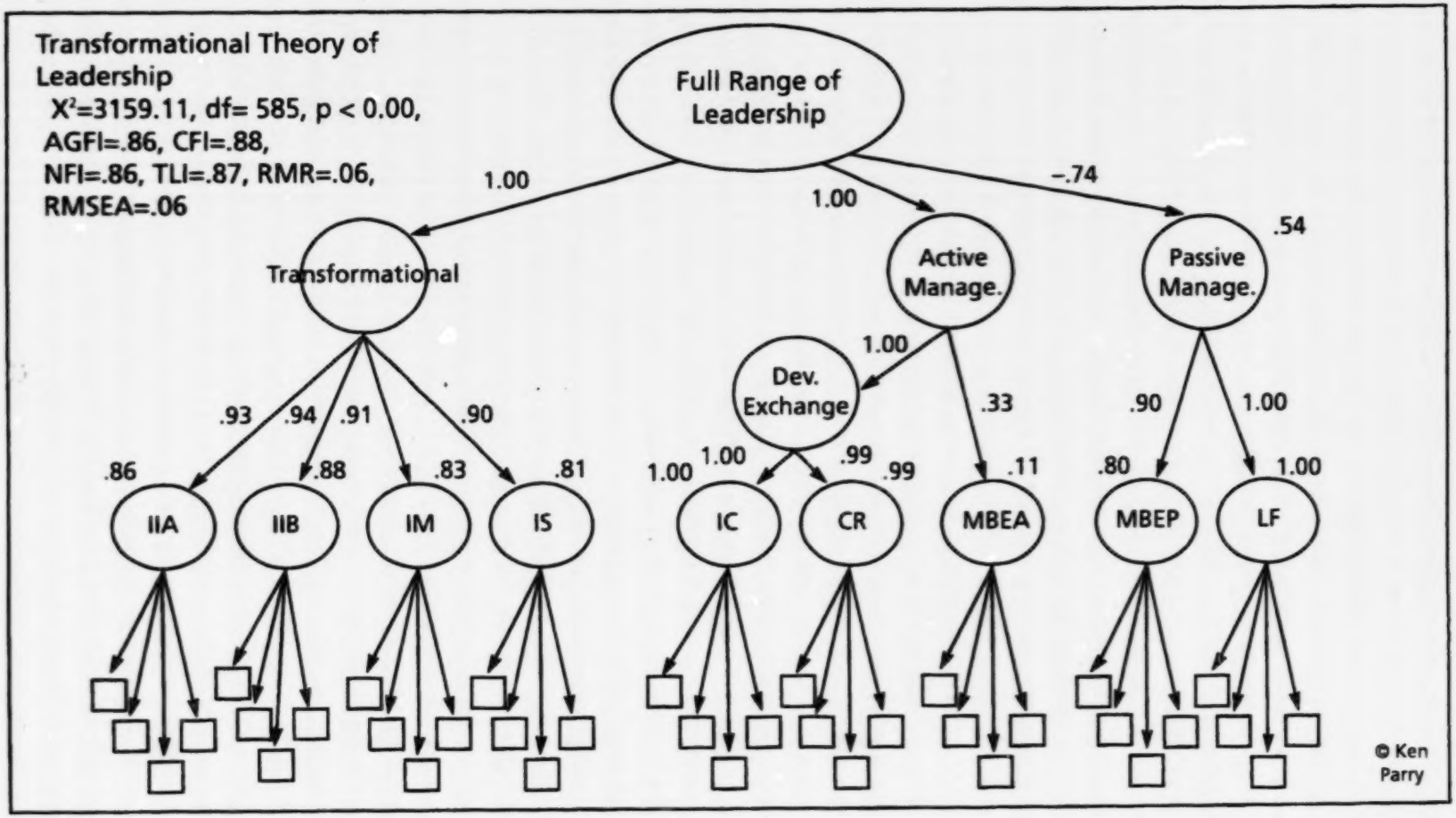

Figure 11.3 IIA Idealized Influence-attributed; IIB II-behaviors; IM inspirational motivation; IS intellectual stimulation; IC individualised consideration; CR contingent reward; MBEA management-by-exception-active; MBEP MBE-passive; LF laisssez faire

most explanatory model for transformational leadership suggests that individualized consideration is a part of a construct called developmental exchange rather than a part of transformational leadership.

Also, developmental exchange and management-by-exception-active constitute the construct of active management, which is distinct from the passive management construct consisting of MBE-passive and *laissez-faire* leadership. Finally, note that "active management," which includes active management-by-exception, has a strong positive relationship with the overarching latent construct of "full range of leadership," whereas only the passive management constructs have a negative relationship with the "full range of leadership."

DEVELOPING ALTERNATE APPROACHES

Sooklal reports briefly on his grounded theory research, which uncovered leadership in a substantive setting as the "brokering of dreams." He cites the leadership phenomenon of one giving an identity to one's personal vision, and then relinquishing ownership of that vision. Hanlon also used the grounded theory method. He utilized mainly qualitative data, but content-analyzed it quantitatively (this is what Bryman would call "quantification of the qualitative rhetoric") to test the Sooklal theory. In common with Melanie Kan, Hanlon used triangulation of data and the analysis thereof and found conflicting results. The strength of the grounded theory method is to make sense of those ambiguous findings and interpret them in order to find an explanation at an even higher level of abstraction. Interestingly, Hanlon could not confirm Sooklal's substantive theory in another substantive setting. Also, the "enactment" of the leadership vision was found to be more "management" than "leadership." Indeed, Gordon might say that "enactment" is the overt exercise of power, and Ropo and colleagues might liken it to the conducting of an organizational orchestra. Mumford and Van Doorn (2001) would call it "utilitarian" or "pragmatic" leadership. The process is neither just leadership nor just management; it is neither transformation nor transaction, but a form of mobilization that achieves outcomes for the leader. Such a nuance on leadership is certainly a rich vein for future research.

METHODOLOGICAL APPLICATIONS

As an alternative to traditional, quantitatively oriented hypothesis testing strategies of scientific inquiry, the grounded theory method represents a set of qualitative techniques that are more or less structured depending

on whether one is conducting full or partial grounded theory, and which are designed to generate theory. Although the grounded approach to theory development as originally conceived by Glaser and Strauss (1967) has fractured into the "Glaserian" (Glaser, 1992) and "Straussian" (Strauss & Corbin, 1990) approaches to theory generation, the method is still "grounded" in the data. But one common, prominent feature of grounded-theory approaches is the emphasis on context. In this regard, any grounding of leadership theory will naturally proceed from the systematic collection of qualitative (and quantitative) data within different and specific contexts. Herman and Egri focus on the context of environmental leadership, and we can see this contextual priority vividly on display in Duignan and colleagues' SOLR project, with its focus on human service organizations. As with the Herman and Egri chapter, we see here creative attempts to weave together both qualitative and quantitative data. One of the most interesting aspects of this research, as with the research by Craig Roberts, was the inclusion of "reflective practitioners" as coresearchers. Duignan and colleagues more formally and systematically include into their project of human service leadership, the same collaborative, participative ethic that Herman and Egri display more informally and surreptitiously in their study of environmental leaders. In both of these chapters we see a degree of active participation by the objects and subjects of study, in theory formulation that is rather unusual in more traditional leadership research paradigms, where objects/subjects of study are passive respondents.

Herman and Egri also pursue triangulation of method, and they emphasized the compatibility of methods, not just the complementarity of them. We are grateful that they remind us of the value of three forms of triangulation: methodological triangulation, data triangulation, and theoretical triangulation. Researcher triangulation is the fourth form of triangulation.

There is considerable variation concerning the implementation of grounded theory—not the least of which is reflected in the Glaser versus Strauss debate of the early 1990s. Since before that debate, many social science researchers who claimed to use grounded theory were using only some selected subset of grounded theory methodological procedures. Often researchers claiming a grounded approach are not detailed enough about the specifics of their approach, nor the thinking behind their methodological decisions. For this reason, there needs to be clarification from researchers that they are using the "full" or "partial" grounded theory method; or that they are "drawing from" the grounded theory method, if they are not using the full method (whether Glaserian, Straussian, or both).

Both the Herman and Egri chapter and the Duignan and colleagues chapter provide some of that detail, as does the chapter by Kan. The Herman and Egri chapter highlights many of the classical features of doing

grounded-theory work, along the lines of Strauss and Corbin (1990). In doing so, the authors reveal for readers the iterative, nonlinear, and social nature of their research enterprise. Roberts probes partnering with strategic allies as part of the grounded theory process. He discusses his experience as a researcher gaining the trust of his research participants, and of the richness of data that ensues. With this research partnering method, the researcher becomes an actor in the phenomenon, *and* the actors effectively become coresearchers. What comes across clearly is the sense of discovery, the sensitivity for and identification with the objects of their study, the importance of serendipity, life circumstances, and collaborative friendships. These are variables that are so crucial to the process of leadership, yet are so lacking in the mainstream leadership research. These chapters are ostensibly a discussion of a grounded research approach to studying the social processes of leadership, yet are just as much descriptions of the social influence processes involved in conducting the research itself.

The chapter by Melanie Kan has some affinity with the chapters by Duignan and colleagues and by Herman and Egri, in that this too is a study that details some of the grounded theory tools and techniques employed, including constant comparison and theoretical sampling. Kan argues that grounded theory is well suited to address the complexity of leadership by providing a more "nuanced" understanding of various local micro-contexts, a sentiment and focus that is shared by the other chapters, although this is perhaps the most micro of them all. She presents a grounded theory study of nursing leadership wherein, *inter alia*, she quantitatively examined nursing leadership with the use of a standardized questionnaire, and then qualitatively examined the anomalies *within* those statistics and *between* the qualitative and quantitative results. So often, as Kan points out, researchers are overly reliant on survey results, taking them at face value, without the benefit of a more interpretive account that takes into consideration local, contextual nuances that may considerably alter the interpretations that would come from the survey findings *per se*. In some respects, Kan's approach to survey results is the antithesis of traditional leadership research paradigms using such standardized surveys. Things that annoy, dismay, and frustrate the typical researcher (low reliabilities, missing responses, etc.) are the grist for grounded theory work on leadership that necessarily entails and invokes contextual sensitivity and understanding. In this approach, a more complex understanding of leadership is made possible by Kan's desire to treat the activity of filling out a leadership survey as a phenomenon *per se*, and as a process revealing something important about the phenomenography (Marton, 1981) of the respondent and the cultural context within which the respondent participates.

Kan combines qualitative and quantitative data into the grounded theory method. There is a convergence in Kan's examination of the "warts"

that appear in the collection of quantitative survey data on leadership assessments (in her case, the MLQ), and Conger's dissatisfaction with the now-standard use of multisource, 360-degree feedback. Conger takes it one step further by discussing the qualitative questionnaire. He stands in essential opposition to a psychometric approach with its emphasis on reliability and similarity of ratings given to some focal leader by different raters.

Conger argues that such variation ought to be embraced as meaningful, and not related to error around some artificially sacred central tendency. This variation is insight that ought to be further explored and interpreted. Conger sees a role for quantitative data in developing these insights further. The insights can be classified or categorized according to the level of the rater, the effectiveness of the leader, or the types of outcomes that are generated. In a sense, Conger is calling for the same sort of more highly nuanced understanding of the local context and perspective of people making ratings. He is probably referring obliquely to the methodology of phenomenography, wherein the lived experience of the subject is central to the phenomenon under investigation, and the research focus is on the qualitatively different ways that people experience and perceive the world around them. Conger's solution, which is to include more open-ended opportunities for responding in a narrative way to leadership issues, is different in means from Kan's solution, but appears similar in intents and purposes. In both chapters, there is a recognition that quantitative surveys and the usual implementation of basic and applied research programs that utilize them are limiting and misleading.

Through adopting Conger's suggestion for qualitative questionnaires, imagine the illumination, not to mention the fun, to be derived from coding all the animals or foods or colors that are analogues for the 'best' leaders *vis-à-vis* the "worst" leaders. One could foresee that the "best" leaders might be soft and cuddly animals or that the "worst" leaders were dangerous animals like tigers or sharks. Furthermore, imagine the illumination that would come from the next iteration of talking through these metaphors with trusting partnered researchers embedded within collaborative organizations. If there was consistency across the qualitative questionnaire responses, one could talk with interviewees to tell us the story of the "organizational shark" or the "managerial vindaloos" rather than the more mundane and less illuminating "manager who gets people to exert higher than expected discretionary effort." Further theoretical coding, in accordance with the full grounded theory method, would enable the modeling of responses, and the generation of a theoretical explanation of the phenomenon under investigation.

These analogies and metaphors are a universal language, whereas the managerial language is techno-speak for a certain mental model. Analogies, metaphors, and visual language are a universal vernacular for all voca-

tions, industries, trades, and trainings. If one wants to talk "lawyer's language" or "accountant's language" then one can only talk with lawyers or accountants. However, if one uses visual and metaphorical language, one can talk simultaneously with all walks of life about the same phenomenon. That is a valuable research tool. It is also an extremely valuable managerial tool.

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